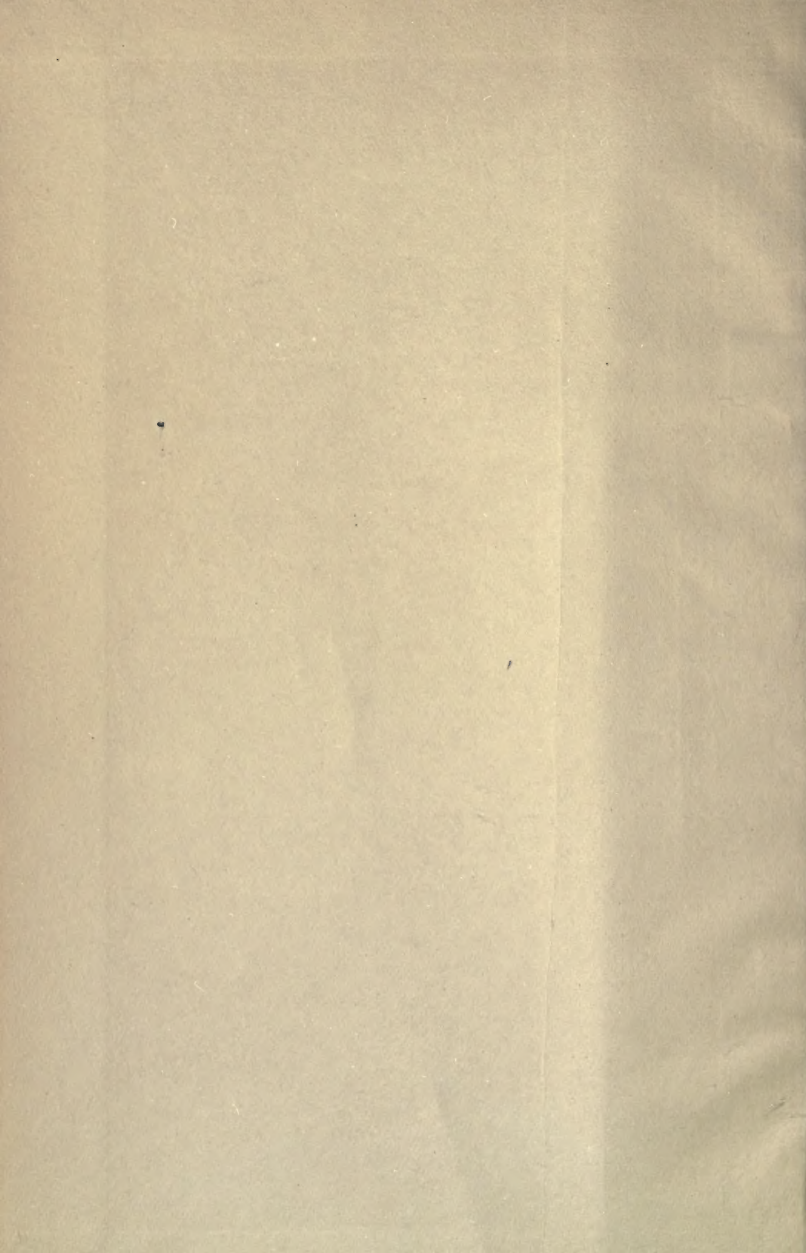


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OXFORD CONFERENCES
ON FAITH

OXFORD CONFERENCES ON FAITH

(SUMMER TERM, 1903)

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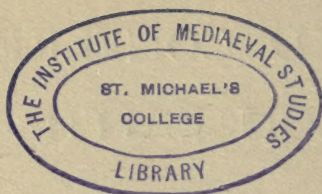
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TO
MY FATHER
WHO THROUGHOUT THE TRIALS
OF A LONG LIFE
BY GOD'S MERCY HAS KEPT
THE FAITH

BQT

1781

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PREFACE

THE same apology which prefaced the author's Conferences on Prayer must again find its place at the head of the present volume. Only because the following Conferences substantially represent what was preached, do they claim the title of Oxford Conferences. The outlines from which the spoken word sprang have been filled in with subsequent thought. And though much of the matter which came forward in delivery has necessarily been laid aside or forgotten, the author hopes that no loss to the depth or clearness of the doctrine has been the result.

If in treating, as he has done, of this difficult subject he has had any aim beside that of fulfilling the word of authority to go and preach, it has been to lure his hearers—and his readers—to the pages of St. Thomas and to the decrees

PREFACE

of the Vatican Council. All that he has written has been with the object of serving, not indeed as a commentary, but as an introduction to these two treasuries of thought. For that end alone has he written; nor would his reward be trivial were some of his readers to follow his lead and find therein the joy that he has found.

WOODCHESTER, *9th November* 1904.

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OXFORD CONFERENCES ON FAITH

I

THE PROBLEM OF FAITH

Two thoughts will occupy our mind during the present conference: (1) the history of the problem of faith; and (2) the judgment to be passed upon its present state. We have been led to take up this method of exposition in the conviction that no true or adequate idea of the present can be obtained except from a study of the past. And though the essence of a being or an event is not its history, the question 'what' and 'whither' can be answered only by the further question—'whence.'

We shall take it for provisionally granted that at all times, and especially since the coming of Jesus Christ, men have been found to profess

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or deny the objective existence of supra-rational truths and the subjective existence of a peculiar power or faculty for believing these truths to be true. The books which we who are gathered here hold to be inspired, represent the first parents of our race as being tried by this problem of a supra-rational order, and as wavering for a moment in their grasp of the unseen. This is but to emphasise the fact that the intellectual difficulty of dogma has been with mankind from the beginning. As we shall see later on, there is a sense in which the problem of faith is a product of modern thought, or of that intellectual function which takes the place, in matters religious, of genuine thinking. Nevertheless doubt, like poverty, has always been with us. If it is in any way true that the faith crisis is a modern product, this means no more than that the war, which from time immemorial has been waged in the open, has now concentrated itself round the capital. The campaign has given place to a formal siege.

We are more concerned with the fortunes of faith since the coming of Jesus Christ, whose life and doctrine are the highest revelation of what

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lies beyond this world of experience. When, then, we take a broad view of belief and unbelief during the nineteen centuries that come between our age and His, we are struck by a well-marked geographical and, if I may so say, philosophical division. For the first ten or it may be eleven centuries, the question of faith was mooted and discussed chiefly in the East. Then for causes which cannot be enumerated or even discovered, the field of activity moved westward, changing not only its habitat, but its characteristics. Not that either the geographical or logical frontiers were at any time sharply marked and clearly defined. The historian cannot lay his finger on the date when the westward movement of theological thought began or ended, just as he cannot say when the Wars of the Roses or any other historic struggle began and died. Neither can the geographer define the frontier that marks East from West, however certainly he may hold that in these matters of philosophical thought West and East are true ideas, yet not identical ideas. So, too, the theologian or philosopher may not be able to mark any distinct water-

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shed of ideas, sharply parting all the thought of the West from all the thought of the East. Principles and doctrines which would seem dominantly Oriental are to be found on this side of the Danube, as the mysticism of Tauler and Suso. Again, the Antiochene school of Biblical criticism, with its cult of the letter and neglect of the spirit, seems to have forestalled the historical method of our modern Western exegetes. Yet whilst the historian, the geographer, and the philosopher would agree in owning that the divisions between East and West were nothing if not indefinite, they would hold in common that Eastern and Western theological thought are as different in distribution and characteristics as the flora of Borneo and the British Isles.

From the first moment that the Church of Christ made an appeal to the East, her liturgical observances, organic constitution, ethical code, and still more her dogmatic teaching, were given over to discussion. Few fundamental doctrines of the faith passed unquestioned. The very corner-stone of dogma and morals, Jesus Christ, was not too sacred for discussion and

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rejection. The reverence of faith and the recklessness of unbelief united in resolving that He should not lie hid. Now it was His humanity that was wrangled over; now His Godhead. Scarcely had the Church defined Him to be of one nature with His Father, by the term *ὁμοούσιος*,¹ than it was called upon to declare Him to be of the same human nature as His Mother by the term *θεοτόκος*.² These two terms alone, which we read so unemotionally in our Creed and Litany, call up strange memories of the surge of human passion or divine enthusiasm that raged round their birth—how the *θεοτόκος* was carried in the teeth of brute force at Ephesus—how, in spite of the definition of *ὁμοούσιος*, ‘the world cried out,’ to use St. Jerome’s daring phrase, ‘at finding itself Arian’—how politics became inextricably interwoven and entangled with religion—how men chose the side of orthodoxy or heterodoxy as they might choose their political party—how Plato’s dream of philosopher-kings and king-philosophers was more than realised when emperors drew up creeds and summoned councils—how the precedent of philo-

¹ Consubstantial.

² Mother of God.

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sopher-kings has not added to the reputation of Plato—how sees such as Alexandria, once orthodox, became the homes of heresy—how the sons of martyrs became apostates and persecutors—how even in the divinely-guided and divinely-guarded discussion of general councils the fate of fundamental dogmas trembled in the balance—how the tares everywhere grew up rank and obvious in the Master's field, as if to justify the Master's foresight—and lastly, how the close struggle for the doctrines of faith left the truth victorious and indeed stronger than before.

To our Western minds there is, perhaps at first sight, an air of unreality, or, if you will, of mere casuistry, in the dogmatic disputes of these ages of controversy. The annals of Arianism would read like the academic disputes of rival professors did we not know that behind the subtleties of *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὁμοιούσιος* crouched the armies of Europe and the fate of Western civilisation. Carlyle in later life came to anathematise his youthful anathemas of the subtle Athanasius. Perhaps we may account for the want of sympathy shown by the West for these Eastern heresies by the different characteristics of West and East.

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The Oriental mind is not cast in the same mould as ours. Whether its peculiar bent of thought is a racial difference reaching back to the individuality of an original ancestor, or whether it is a mere climatic product bred into a race radically identical with our own, we should find it hard to say. But the fact is as obvious as the cause is obscure. By instinct, by education, by choice, by profession, the Oriental mind is more bent than are we of the West on acknowledging its dependence on some higher Being than itself. Into the nature of that Being it will seek to penetrate. No barrier of subtlety will arrest it. No shadow of pantheistic monism or Manichean dualism will daunt it. It will make the fate of immemorial dynasties and vast kingdoms depend on what our Western minds would consign to the forgetfulness of the lecture-hall, where alone the war of words may be waged. For the East the transcendental question is of supreme interest. It measures everything by the Infinite; whereas in the West even the Infinite must somewhat submit to be measured, and at times limited, by the finite. So, too, the Eastern mind will hesitate to follow conscience till God approve; the Western mind will not

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hearken to God till the conscience approve. In the East everything, even the mind of man, is an emanation or product or outcome of God ; in the most characteristic of Western idealistic systems God may be said to be a product of man's mind through conscience¹ or consciousness.² And though it would probably be beyond the mark to hold that the Eastern mind was dominantly objective, the Western dominantly subjective, we may make bold to maintain that if the Eastern mind is dominantly theological, the Western mind is dominantly psychological. This explains the fact that in the East intellectual activity concerned itself with the dogmas of faith rather than the act of faith. Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism—heresies so characteristically Oriental as to have survived, in great part, amongst millions of Eastern Christians until to-day—were not a denial of the reasonableness of being asked to believe, but of the reasonableness of what laid claim to be believed. Thus the efforts of Eastern unbelief were dominantly directed to the *Cre-denda*, whereas in the West the same efforts were directed against the *Credere*. The Oriental

¹ Kant,

² Fichte, Hegel.

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mind finds faith a necessity; the Western mind finds faith a difficulty. One haggles over the quality of the mysteries it is called upon to believe; the other protests against the mere quality of *mystery*, accounting a dogma more or less of little matter, provided it can be brought to the act of belief.

Thus it was to be expected, that when sound learning began to leave the East for the West, under pressure of advancing Mohammedanism, the problem of faith, ever present as the shadow of learning, began gradually to adapt itself to its changed surroundings. To the eye of the loyal Christian the struggles of the first ten centuries had been providentially productive of permanent gain to the cause of faith. All the general councils previous to the twelfth century had met in the East, in order to meet the needs of the East. Their outcome had been to set beyond doubt the visible Incarnation of the Son of God, and the official continuation of the work of the Incarnate Son amongst the body of believers who held visible communion with the See of Peter, the Vicar of Christ. Then, when the doctrine of the Incarnation, so successfully fostered and

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defended by the Holy See, was placed beyond the cavil of heretics, Eastern Christianity, as if its work were done, broke from unity and life into the sterile changelessness of schism and heresy.

Before dealing more immediately with the tone and temper of Western unbelief, a slight digression may be made to remark a phenomenon of no slight interest. As early as the fifth century a forecast of our characteristic difficulties was given by the teaching of the British monk, Morgan, so famous in history under the name Pelagius. Perhaps the true significance of Pelagianism has yet to be understood. For a brief space it aroused the Eastern Church by its resolute appeal to man's free-will and individuality. It struck the Western note of freedom and subjectivity. It broke into the subtleties of Eastern theology with the rugged principles of psychology. It survived for a time in Southern France, weakened down to semi-Pelagianism. Its sudden appearance no less than its equally sudden disappearance is an historical phenomenon worthy of special study. Born out of due time and under a foreign sky, it stood little chance of surviving amongst Oriental disputants

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in its conflict with the purely theological disputes of Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches. Nevertheless it was too redolent of the temper of Western thought to die and not to rise again. When civilisation at length passed from East to West, Pelagianism rose anew from its ashes transformed, and in the Protestant Pelagianism of the sixteenth century the fate of faith in Western Europe reached its first great crisis.

The problem of faith when changing its past surroundings was forced for life's sake to change its characteristics. Pure Pelagianism, though a strange forecast of our peculiarly Western difficulties of faith which Protestantism fulfilled, was not fitted to the intellectual wants of Western unbelief. Although it asserted the power of unaided free-will to climb any supernatural heights demanded by God, its recognition of human spontaneity was not complete enough. It concerned itself a little too suspiciously with the *Credenda*. The psychological bent of Western civilisation, as we have said, was more towards the *Credere*. When Luther appeared with his appeal to 'Private Judgment,' even though accompanied by a denial of free-will,

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he provided a doctrine which recommended itself to vast numbers of his contemporaries in the West. His principle meant spontaneity or subjectivity in the fundamental function of spiritual life, *i.e.* in thought, whereas Pelagius had asserted that spontaneity merely in the moral functions of will. To dethrone the immemorial and visible authority of the Head of Christendom was no more than a logical continuance of Luther's principle. Western Europe had found a convenient if somewhat provisional formula for its problem of faith. Though not all Protestants nor yet all Lutherans follow Luther in every phase of his teaching, all alike instinctively look up to him, if not as one who gave them the Law on the Mount, at least as one who led them from the house of bondage into the land of promise.

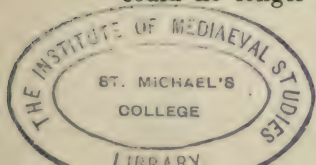
It was inevitable that his formula of Private Judgment would revenge itself in the course of centuries. Heresy will out; moreover it will run out. Errors, if let alone, end by contradicting, or at least counteracting, themselves. Like equations of a certain kind they dissolve themselves into a satisfactory $0=0$. Men, with any pretence to consistency of thought, could not or would

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not go on accepting the supernatural and supra-rational on a basis of rationalism. Protestantism as a mode of thought could not be final. It was initial, introductory, provisional, embryonic, propædæutic. Seeing that it was the beginning, it could hardly be mistaken for the end. Not that those who had control of the beginning could have foreseen, or foreseeing could have controlled, the end. Even if Protestantism in the minds of its founders meant little more than a violent reaction against an exaggerated tone of religious thought, the result of Protestantism must be clearly distinguished from its object. Just as Plato and Aristotle were pagans, yet served to prepare minds for Christianity, so was Luther a bigot in matters of dogma, whilst yet his doctrine was the harbinger of unbelief. Like all organisms it is not merely to be judged as a fact but as a force; it is what it has or will become. As Protestantism rested on an intellectual basis of subjectivism, the passage of years would see it dissolve little by little until the supra-rational *Credenda* or dogmas would be eliminated; and with the absence of mysteries would come the disuse, and finally the atrophy, of supernatural

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faith. Logically Protestantism meant rationalism. Historically it was fated to beget and to pass into indifference. Three centuries had scarcely run their course when the psychological, or if you will, subjective premisses of Protestantism had wrought themselves out to their utter limits of agnosticism and unbelief. Not that unbelief had been able to make itself into an *Ecclesia Negans*; nor yet that the thinkers who disbelieved agreed in anything more positive than their disbelief. They presented no unbroken front except against the rationality of the act of faith. They were materialists, agnostics, sceptics, pantheists, positivists, subjectivists, transcendentalists, naturalists, evolutionists, idealists. They could make no common cause except to dispute the supernatural claims of faith. Idealism had no greater enemies than the so-called evolutionists. The cruder forms of evolution found no satisfactory arguments against idealism. It was a chaos of unbelief wildly striving against the cosmos of faith. Things had come to such a pitch of negation and confusion that the 'Pillar and the Ground of Truth' could no longer withhold her guidance; and in



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1870 bishops, assembled for the first time in the history of civilisation from the four quarters of the world, proclaimed the existence of that supernatural order of truths and faculties which it had been the fatal outcome of Protestantism to deny.

But the year of the Vatican Council summarises so much of the Western problem of faith that we cannot pass it over with merely a word. Here at Oxford Jowett was first introducing rationalistic apologetics into the common-room of Balliol, and thereby into the minds of many a politician and of not a few bishops of the Established Church. For the moment it seemed that the naturalistic hypotheses of Darwin, Spencer, and others were supreme, though few could foresee the reaction that was so soon to overthrow that supremacy. Men were deceived into considering the triumphs of naturalism permanent by the glamour of the dialectical triumphs won for it by Huxley and Haeckel. Even in the classic land of modern idealism Haeckel was more popular than Hegel. The attack upon the unseen world was so persistent, and so scientifically organised, that the Cowper-

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Temple clause of the Elementary Education Bill nearly succeeded in banishing all chance of supernaturalism from the schools of the poor. Meanwhile Teuton and Frank were fast preparing for the war which has provided so many texts for every self-appointed seer who cares to prophesy the fall of Latin and the rise of Teutonic civilisation, though to other eyes the lesson would seem to be that nations handed over to unbelief have little chance against nations that believe. In Rome Pope Pius IX. was getting ready to fly from the Eternal City. Already men were gathering together outside the city for the hundredth time to put an end to the Throne of the Fisherman. Within the city a scarcely less numerous crowd were gathered together in the name not of war, but of God. Never in the annals of the Church had so many bishops, and from so many nations, and from such free, progressive peoples, met under the shadow of the Rock. Nor could they meet without the world knowing, criticising, scouting, praising, awaiting, praying for their decisions. *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.* Every one could hear the noise of their foregathering; but few could see

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that the crowd of septuagenarian bishops tottering on the brink of death were making one of those few years of the world's life that subsume and symbolise the history of past centuries. Men who had no sense of historical perspective looked upon the Vatican Council as a vast and successful design of a powerful theological school whose method was intrigue, whose object was the aggrandisement of their party, and whose victory was announced 'Urbi et Orbi' when the successor of St. Peter was declared infallible. Yet this view of the council displaces it completely from its chronological and psychological surroundings. Assuredly it is no part of Catholic apologetics to assume or assert that the Church could meet together at headquarters without displaying some of those human emotions and passions which none of the theological virtues fully banish from the soul. Every army bears with it a band of irresponsible camp-followers, who stand related to the fighting men somewhat as the shadow stands to the substance. Even in the army itself human nature may find an entrance. Jealousy, intrigue, anger, ambition, may all have a place in the hearts of those whose brain and

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arm are winning the campaign. To be conscious of the human warp that was interwoven with the Vatican Council should make us only more keenly conscious of the divine help that brought it to its true issue. For the Fathers of the council met, not to further an ambition, but to discuss a problem and to solve it. And it was the everlasting problem of faith. Their feeble voices at length come forth from the council proclaiming, with no uncertain accent, the four truths on which the unseen world is set, and towards which the eyes of the modern world are turned, viz.: that over men there is the Maker of men; that we have reason enabling us to discover Him; faith enabling us to believe Him; and an infallible mouthpiece of revelation to declare Him. In this view of the council, stirring thoughts are seen to underlie the quiet prose of the council's opening words:—

‘No one is ignorant that the heresies proscribed by the Fathers of Trent, by which the divine teaching authority (*magisterium*) of the Church was rejected, and all matters regarding religion were surrendered to the judgment of each individual, have gradually become broken up into

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many sects, which disagree and contend with each other, until at length many have lost all faith in Christ. Even the Holy Scriptures, which had previously been declared the sole source and judge of Christian doctrine, have begun to be no longer held as divine, but to be ranked among the fictions of mythology.

‘Then there has arisen, and all too widely overspread the world, that doctrine of rationalism or naturalism which opposes itself in every way to the Christian principle as a supernatural institution, and works with the utmost zeal in order that after Christ, our sole Lord and Saviour, has been excluded from the minds of men, and from the life and moral acts of nations, the reign of what they call pure reason or nature may be established. And after forsaking and rejecting the Christian religion and denying the true God and His Christ, the minds of many have sunk into the abyss of pantheism, materialism, and atheism’ (*Const. Dogm. de Fide Catholica*).

In what we have hitherto said we have given the history of the problem of faith. It now only remains for us to pass some provisional judgment upon its present state. For us the

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real difficulty is not to account for the multitudinous sects which everywhere divide the Christendom of to-day as they divided the Christendom of the first ages. The presence of this infinitesimal subdivision of Christians is in no sense the peculiar evil of our age. The entirely new feature with which we open the twentieth century is the spread of unbelief which, under the name of science, positivism, naturalism, idealism, has influenced the thought not only of the few who think for themselves, but of the toiling many who have time only to take their thinking second-hand. The spread of such unbelief throughout all classes is a phenomenon hitherto unheard of in history. In recording it we are perforce reminded of the Master's prophecy that a time would come when faith would be hard to find in the world. At first sight the problem of faith would seem to justify a pessimism not to be quelled by the comforting proverb that 'things at their worst must either mend or end.' But first sights are so misleading as to lay on us the necessity of taking a dispassionate view of the factors tending to justify a more encouraging and, we hope, truer view of

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the final issues. These factors we will take to be the triumphs of science, the reign of law, the decadent state of the historic seats of supernatural authority.

The triumphs of science are often responsible for the loss of faith. Naturally enough the vast treasures won by modern experiment and research are calculated to wield a strong fascination over minds immersed in phenomena. Inventions and discoveries have bridled the fiercest forces of nature. The subtle forms of time and space are almost annihilated by the mind of man. Now it is an axiom as old as Christianity, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' If, then, forces are to be measured by what they achieve, no wonder that apologists of the spiritual world are given so poor a hearing by those who appeal to the logic of visible facts—a logic which the material progress of the last century has raised to the hundredth power. Yet, withal, it is from this same scientific or naturalistic side that hope still springs. For we must not confound science with unbelief, nor consider that scientists as a class are unbelievers. In every branch of science those who believe have stood in the first rank.

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And though, for example, Darwin gradually lost hold of theistic truth, his mental attitude towards a revealed environment was not so much that of positive agnosticism as of nescience and atrophy. At any rate men did not think it incongruous that the author of the *Descent of Man* should be laid to rest under the shadow of St. Peter in Westminster Abbey. Again, the progress of science has been chiefly due to the fact that in whatsoever kingdom of matter or force scientists plunged, it was always under the inspiration, and indeed assumption, of two of the most daring postulates of reason — the rationality of the universe, and the omnipresence of causality. Now such instinctive and indispensable assumptions should make, as indeed they have in great part made, scientists realise that the recognition of a First Intelligent Cause, if not itself a primal instinct of thought, is so congenial to our thinking, as to harmonise with and unify the causal instincts underlying science. Moreover science has been called bankrupt. To be quite accurate, science is not bankrupt; it is merely sterile. It is as unproductive as pure intelligence. It is as unpractical as mere theo-

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rising. Science, as we are slowly beginning to see, can investigate and co-relate facts. But it cannot appraise them. It does not know their worth. It has no medicine for the soul's ills. As it will not own the rights of conscience, it cannot cure sorrow of heart. It can persuade men of the reign of law, order, force; but it cannot convince the world of sin. Its past triumphs show that in material interests it can do much; but it cannot supplant the Cross, nor the revelation that flows from it, nor the faith that believes it, nor the sorrow that craves for it, nor the love that made it.

Let us turn from the subject, science, to the subject-matter, the universe, in which science has discovered the supremacy of law. Here, too, we shall find that the problem of faith has become at once more acute and more hopeful. We willingly grant that the supreme discovery of modern investigation is the omnipresence of law, not only in the world but in the universe. The universe is a *κόσμος* wherein we cannot

‘pluck a flower

Without troubling of a star.’

To some minds this omnipresence takes an

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anthropomorphic setting as if law were a mighty autocrat ruling the universe from end to end, with no foe to dispute his rights or to pass his frontiers. Such an unjustifiable view of law makes it impossible for scientists to admit any intrusion into the world of thought by revelation—or into the world of causality by miracles. But it is needless to say that it is not learning, but a little learning, that leads to such an apotheosis of law. A science that demands so much of us must be rejected as too superstitious. We are gradually beginning to find out that the *κόσμος* is like one of those balls which are formed of consecutive layers. The outer layers are patient of intrusions from the inner. Are we not learning from psychology the possibility and existence of intrusions from a subliminal sphere of thought? And does not this latest theory of science make it easier to believe that the world of thought is patient of revelation, and the world of things patient of miracles? Then, again, if any law of the universe as such can be formulated, it would seem to be the law of progress, so imperfectly expressed by the formula 'survival of the fittest.' Yet what does this law

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of movement towards a final good mean, if not a recognition that the *κόσμος* is not merely a rational but a moral order? In other words, the totality of things is not merely a Unity but a Good. Over all reside and preside perfect Mind and Good-will. Moreover, does not one peculiar merit of modern philosophic thought lie in the recognition of the continuity of the *κόσμος*? Beings exist in series. The world is hierarchical. If so, then is it not natural to complete the series by adding the apex, *i.e.* the Infinite and wholly immaterial Mind?

A last reason for the crisis of truth is the state of the so-called seat of authority in the world. There are some who think that Infallibility and the Infallible Church have had their day. Moreover, whilst science is winning such triumphs, the classic seat of religion and authority is presumed to be effete and powerless. But are the facts so in reality or only at first sight? And even if this was the fact, would the fact warrant the conclusion? Science has had its triumphs granted! Has religion had no triumphs? Will science ever renew the face of the earth as religion has done? During the French Revolu-

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tion a dreamer came to Talleyrand to get the great diplomatist's opinion on a new religion he was bringing out. 'You need only one thing,' replied Talleyrand, 'and your religion will be perfect.' 'What is that?' replied the philosopher. 'Be crucified; then rise the third day,' was the reply. In spiritual and even in social matters, science is more fruitful in prophecies than results, whereas faith can point to the renewed face of the soul. Moreover, faith has survived; religion has survived; Rome has survived. If that which survives is best, then religious authority has the irrefutable title of possession and survival. Even at its lightest, this argument must be weighty with those who make psychology their point of departure; but its weight is multiplied when we recognise the competitors religious authority has had to eliminate. Never has such an attack been made upon the Church as that just delivered in the name of science and philosophy. Yet the Church survives. Indeed, that is to say too little. The Church comes forth from the struggle not merely with life, but with a renewed life. Every truth, every noble aspiration discovered or emphasised by science, has served but to enrich

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the treasure-house of the Church's boons to men.

Thus we may be anxious, but we must not be hopeless, for the future of faith. If the world we live in serves to give the never-ending problem features of peculiar difficulty, the same world of to-day bears with it a message of reassurance. Close by the poison may be found the antidote. Nay, the poison itself, if but understood and controlled, may serve to quicken that life which it would otherwise destroy. We cannot change our world for another; nor our age for another. Indeed, I know not that we would even if we might. Despair and hope are not objective elements in the crisis itself. They are attitudes of the mind resolved to see that which is worst or best in what we have to meet. Those of us who know the past fortune of the Church will not find it hard to hope, and, because hope is active, to work for the ingathering of men into the fold of faith.

II

THE OBJECT OF FAITH

‘THE Catholic Church with one consent has ever held and does hold that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and in object: in *principle* because our knowledge in the one is by natural reason and in the other by divine faith; in *object* because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God, which unless divinely revealed cannot be known’ (*Conc. Vat. Cons. de Fide. c. iv.*).

In our opening conference we ventured to assert that our Western statement of the problem of faith was frank unbelief. Whilst not ignoring the existence of much practical belief and many good works, it was our duty to record the fact that no period of history has ever witnessed such a widespread denial of the supernatural as the present century. At the same time the words

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of the Vatican Council make it evident that no more precise affirmation of the supernatural has ever been made than that which came from the bishops assembled at Rome in A.D. 1870. We have placed the words of the council at the head of what we are about to say because, loyal children of the Church as we are, her utterances have a power over us which no other words of merely human thought or eloquence can have. We would not depreciate the many graces of modern literature and the many truths or lofty ideals of modern philosophy, but having heard the simple and withal profound words of the Church building up in the midst of so many denials, overthrowals, ruins, to whom else shall we go for the words of Eternal Life? Nor would you have the same confidence in my teaching were I to dissociate it, in its insignificance and imperfection, from the message of the Pillar and the Ground of Truth.

Before developing the words of the council by a plain commentary, it will help us to see them in their true setting if we recall the phases of thought which the Fathers of the council had in view when drawing up their act of faith in the object of faith. Gathered together from all

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quarters of the world, the bishops who declared their belief in the supernatural order were not mere philosophers of the lecture-hall. They were shepherds of souls in every nation of the universe, and in every rank of life. Manning came from England and from Oxford, Keuler, Hefele, and Fessler represented the land of Kant and Hegel and Strauss, Dupanloup spoke the mother-tongue of Descartes, Voltaire, and Renan, Kenrick bore witness from the New World of thought and action. When these men from the West and beyond the seas sat down with the East to speak of what faith is and what it sees, their words were not tokens of empty dreams unknown to the rest of the world, but denials of definite, living errors which were at that moment ravaging their flocks in their fatherlands.

We might hazard a summary of these errors by placing them under the titles of: (1) Atheism, (2) Agnosticism, (3) Scepticism. We do not dare affirm that, historically speaking, there are groups of men who would acknowledge their inclusion in any of these groups. Ours is a logical division. Yet it does not divide mere abstractions, but concrete beings of flesh and blood, who by mouth and pen preach as they have preached the new

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evangel of unbelief. To recognise this is to justify ourselves in presuming to classify concrete thinkers by certain attitudes towards the supernatural, which are never found in the logical isolation or purity of our division.

The first attitude towards supernatural truth is the atheistic. A man cast in the atheistic mould may be taken to say: 'The supernatural order cannot be known, because it does not exist. There is no God; there is no immortality; there is little evidence of freedom. But whether the will is as free as the intelligence, there are no beings which we must look upon as our betters; and no one personal being whom we must adore as God. Whoever says he believes in God is publishing either his knavery or his mistake, for nothing can prove God; and whoever affirms that God's existence can be proved is either seeking to deceive others or has already been deceived himself. For to sum the matter up, *I* am absolutely certain that God does not exist.' It will at once be seen that the atheistic attitude cannot long be maintained. For the thorough-going atheist is a dogmatist of the purest water. To be quite sure that there is no God requires, if

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not the same theological premisses, at least the same dogmatic methods as to be quite sure there is a God. Thus an avowed atheist is in his measure a theologian. Moreover his dogmatism is philosophically unjustifiable. Scanning the world, he concludes that God does not exist because he has not seen Him. At first blush he ought to hesitate long before he undertakes the hard task of proving a negation. But to argue from the non-visibility to the non-existence of a being can find no foothold in logic. One scrap of positive evidence is more than enough to counteract all the negations of a purely atheistic logic. For whereas one can argue thus, 'I see it; therefore it is,' we cannot argue, 'I do not see it; therefore it is not.' Hence the atheistic attitude cannot long be maintained by minds capable of dispassionate thought. The attitude is too unnatural to be kept up for any length of time. Men will soon move either into full faith or into a more apparently logical attitude which has been named the agnostic.

Agnosticism, therefore, succeeds logically to atheism. Historically this term was invented by Huxley to signify 'an attitude of reasoned ignorance touching everything that lies beyond the

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sphere of sense perception.’¹ Romanes distinguishes this *pure agnosticism* from what he calls the impure agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, who is taken to have held ‘that if there be a God we know this about Him—that He cannot reveal Himself to man.’² It is somewhat in this latter sense that we use the term agnosticism. We would then represent our agnostic as saying, ‘You must not mistake us for atheists, who are merely theologians of a negation. Now nothing can be more dogmatic than a denial. We agnostics, on the other hand, do not deny that there is a God. We are quite certain that there are natural forces and a great world of nature, of which we are a part. But we cannot get beyond this world. There may be an overworld, or an immanent world. But whether such a world is or is not, we are quite sure that it cannot certainly be known.’ It will be seen at once that this is apparently a more scholarly frame of mind than blank and frank denial. Moreover, it has an easy adaptability to the most divergent philosophical schemes which dignifies it with a certain

¹ *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 108, G. Romanes. London, 1904.

² *Ibid.*

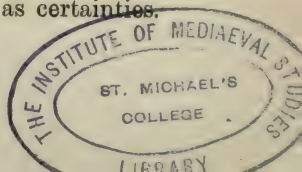
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comprehensiveness. It can harmonise with positivism, as indeed it has harmonised, by assuming that only sensible data beget subjective certitude. It can even harmonise with monism, both spiritualistic and materialistic, by agreeing that whether the human mind is or is not at the summit or near the summit of perfect being, it is at the summit of perfect knowledge—no more perfect consciousness or no more perfectly organised matter being within its purview. From this we may conclude that agnosticism is not the perfectly rational and sober-minded thing it pretends to be. Indeed, it would be hard to look on it as less unphilosophical than thorough-going atheism. To be quite fair, we must own that it is stricken with the same inborn taint. It pins its faith to a negation. It dogmatizes about a denial. The agnostic is a sceptic in affirming that God may or may not exist; but a dogmatist in affirming that whether God exists or not He cannot be known. His method of argument is essentially like the atheist. He makes an unjustifiable induction from one to all, from himself to human nature; and because he himself cannot prove or discern the supernatural to his own

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satisfaction, he assumes that no one else can. Romanes reminds him that 'he should always carefully avoid *the high priori road.*' To be quite logical and loyal to his premisses he must not keep back from the last undogmatic attitude towards the supernatural. He must either give up his unbelief or sink back into what Romanes calls 'pure agnosticism,' and we, scepticism.

The attitude of *Scepticism* is perhaps more logical, and therefore more unsatisfying, than atheism or agnosticism. The two latter frames of mind contain a-priorism enough to satisfy the cravings of the mind for the infinite; as running water just holds air enough to make it drinkable. But the sceptic makes an end to all dogmatism. We have not the absolute and complete sceptic in view when we describe the sceptical attitude as one in which the mind may be taken to make the following assertions: 'We sceptics of the supernatural order must not be confounded with absolute and complete sceptics, who deny the rationality of all certitude. Our doubt or ignorance is only partial. We know in part, and we are ignorant in part. Physical science, and even empiric psychology, we look upon as certainties.'



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But if there be anything beyond or within material and psychological phenomena we do not know. Moreover, as we doubt the existence of what believers call the supernatural order, so also do we doubt its knowableness. We are quite in ignorance both as to whether it is and whether it may be known.' This view of scepticism shows us that, though it is cleared almost entirely of dogmatism, it cannot be an ultimate attitude of thought. If the intuitions and assumptions which lie at the base of the supernatural are swept away in default of scientific proof, what grounds will justify the retention of the intuitions and assumptions which lie at the base of science? It is evident that these assumptions cannot at once be the beginning and the outcome of science. If they are the premisses of science, they cannot be capable of scientific proof. Thus they should receive the same fate as the fundamental assumptions and intuitions of the supernatural. Partial scepticism cannot long hold a mind given over to thinking. But as complete scepticism, though so inevitable, is yet so repugnant to the mind, two things may happen to the partial sceptic. If his soul is not steeped in the

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spirit of reverence the likelihood is that he will degenerate into a cynic, retaining a number of principles which he can neither justify nor discard, and consoling himself in his own inconsistencies by pointing out the foibles and follies of others. Or if his nescience brings him to his senses, and still more if it brings him to his knees, and he begins to feel that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom and that fear of himself which is the beginning of faith, he may rise up from doubt to affirmation, from an empty *Nescio* to the many consolations of *Credo*.¹

It was this atheism, agnosticism, and scepticism that the bishops had in view when they asserted in simple words that 'there is a twofold order of knowledge distinct in . . . object; . . . because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief Mysteries hidden in God, which unless divinely revealed cannot be known.'

We may now go on to comment more closely upon the actual words of the council. Three steps may be taken in order to give a gradual and complete account of the text. We will ex-

¹ Cf. Appendix 1.

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plain what is meant by an object of knowledge, a natural object of knowledge, a supernatural object of knowledge.

In explaining very briefly what is meant by an object of knowledge, we are not ashamed to adhere to the doctrine of scholastic realism, which to our mind is not the doctrine of any school so much as the common consent of men lettered and unlettered alike. We make no doubt that the Kantian object, which is as much the creation as the intuition of a thinking subject, has some justification in fact. Moreover, it has tended to counteract by an infusion of idealism the later materialist poisoning of dogmatic truth. Yet it is needless to say that the Kantian object has no claims on our acceptance, and few on our gratitude. We reject it on many grounds; and if for no other, at least for this, that no simple-minded student of reason and faith can grasp its subtlety. We frankly confess our absolute certainty of our own thinking selves and of other beings that are not ourselves. Indeed, when we reflect upon it, we see that the simplest mental act, whether of accepting, rejecting, believing, reflecting, weighing, or doubting, is already the employment of our thinking faculty on something which is not

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the subject of the faculty or not the faculty of the subject. Thus, strictly speaking, we do not prove or assume the faculty and its object; we employ them. Things do not exist because we reason about them; we reason about them because we and they exist. I myself do not exist because I think; I think because I exist. I merely know that I exist because I know that I think. Moreover, I am quite certain of the difference between thinking of the ego and of the non-ego. I may not be able to put words to my clear conception of the difference. But I am not surprised at the impossibility of expressing such intimate workings of consciousness in terms of acoustics or calligraphy. Nor am I in the least concerned when certain philosophers, who are much cleverer than myself, try to persuade me to give up my trust in myself and in the difference between myself and other beings. I make no attempt to refute them. I merely assent, because I see. If they go on to say that I really do not see, or that I ought not to see, and that they can prove their point, I can only reply that further discussion may serve to confuse and perhaps irritate me, but not convince me—that I speak only for myself—that as I do not seek to prove to them

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what they see or ought to see, so neither should they seek to prove it to me—that the difference between us seems almost inexplicable, unless, indeed, as I shrewdly suspect, we are arguing about words rather than ideas, or have started from entirely different principles. Nevertheless I should be greatly surprised if any of my hearers or readers should think it unwarranted of me to assume that things exist before my mind or their mind begins to observe them—that they exist as beings independent of my thought, though not independent of all thought, seeing that they are the outcome of God's thought; and that, though they are beings and objects of God's thought as long as they exist, they become objects of my thought only when I begin to think of them. Thus in spite of all subtle idealistic objections I am quite certain that the pen I now grasp and guide is an object of my thought, yet not an object created by my thought. As certain as I am of my own existence, so certain I am that even when I leave the room the pen still exists. And if any one thinks I am wrong in this belief, it is clear that as I can do him little good by what I have yet to prove, so he can do me little good by what he has to object.

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We may now consider the natural object of human knowledge. A few verbal explanations may prevent needless confusion of thought. For the moment we are content to accept and follow the obvious distinction of sensitive and intellectual knowledge, since we are all agreed that there is a wide difference between looking on a beautiful landscape and thinking on the abstract quality of beauty. Moreover, sensitive knowledge is merely intuitive. Intellectual knowledge is not merely intuitive, but reflexive; not merely does it observe, but conclude; it takes note of phenomena and makes deductions. Again, having already signified our belief in the existence of objects of knowledge, we must distinguish these objects known from the medium whereby they are known. This distinction, though applying more obviously to intellectual knowledge and to the higher forms of sensitive knowledge, is, in a sense, applicable to even the lowest forms of sensitive knowledge. Touch and taste, which seem to be quite 'immediate,' can hardly be said to give us more than an imperfect knowledge of some of the least essential attributes of being. The other senses of smell, hearing, and sight

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exemplify the existence of a medium of knowledge. Thus the sense of smell is not in immediate contact with its object, but with certain vibrations either of the air or ether, which serve to convey the odour from object to organ. So, too, the sense of hearing is only in immediate contact with atmospheric vibrations; the sense of sight with etheric vibrations. In an analogous way sense-perceptions become the medium whereby the mind rises up through processes of reflexion or ratiocination to the wonderful deductions of natural science.

Just as each sense brings its own particular activity to bear upon the objective world, so does the mind. This activity is little more than symbolised to us by employing the word 'principle' to signify the mind's contribution to the act of thinking upon the data of sense. Probably the two most general and most effective principles are those of *Causation* and *Purpose*, or in other words, of Efficient Cause and Final Cause, which the mind seems to derive from the understanding and, above all, from the will. These two principles serve to make the world the medium or middle term or minor premisses

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for rising up to a scientific knowledge of the efficient and final causes of things. As the extension of the object of knowledge depends chiefly on the medium, the natural objects of human knowledge will therefore be all that can be made known by the being and nature of the world. The proximate causes of forces, as light, heat, electricity, local motion, have led to the present overwhelming development of applied science. The study of remote efficient and final causes, though not so suited for utilitarian purposes, can lead to important speculative and ethical truths. In psychology it can justify or prove the existence of a psychical energy—of free-will, of immortality; in cosmology it can justify the distinction between substance and accident—the dependence of the world on an efficient Cause; in natural theology it can prove the existence of a first intelligence and therefore personal God, who acts upon the world freely and directs it towards a final good; in ethics it can justify the existence of the four cardinal virtues, the inner superiority of good over evil, the duty of hearkening to the voice of conscience, and perhaps the existence of a

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congenital weakness caused by some past lapse of our common human nature.

But we must now turn our thoughts towards the supernatural objects of the mind, which in the opinion of the agnostic cannot be known, and in the opinion of the atheist cannot be. For us these truths are objects of faith; they are the mysteries which the unassisted reason cannot discover or prove. Certain statements about the supernatural object of the mind, if placed in series, may help to make clear the somewhat difficult philosophy of the matter.

In the first place, when it is maintained that there are Mysteries, *i.e.* beings or objects or truths which are the objects of faith and not of reason, we mean that they are the objects of faith rather than of reason. Whilst claiming them particularly for the exercise of faith, we must not be taken to deny them entirely to reason. Thus in some cases reason may be able to demonstrate the existence of beings whose nature it cannot ascertain. Even in knowledge derived through the sense this happens. The ear can hear distant sounds which it cannot recognise as the cry of a beast or of a human being. The eye may catch far-

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off sights of landscape which it cannot analyse; it may be unable to judge whether what it sees is a headland or a cloud, an animal or a man, a friend or a foe. Indeed, it would seem to be a law that the higher the faculty the greater its power of detecting the existence of beings whose nature it cannot at first sight fathom. And thus in the realm of pure intelligence we should be prepared to meet this law. We should not be surprised if the mind discovers the existence of a Being or a sphere of being which it recognises to be beyond its power to fathom. In other words, reason may prove the existence of God, that is of the supernatural order, whilst at the same time recognising that the Being whom it has just power enough to detect, it has not power enough to analyse and comprehend.

Newman has defined a mystery as 'a proposition conveying incompatible notions,' or 'a statement of the inconceivable,'¹ where he seems to be defining a formal, rather than a real, mystery. We might thus explain our own—and perhaps Newman's—view by looking upon all statements as, in part, symbols of truth. All

¹ *Grammar of Assent*, 3rd ed., chap. iv. § 1, p. 43.

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symbols of truth contain something which they explain and something which not merely defies their explanation, but seems to contradict what they have explained. Looking, then, at a mystery as a statement, it may be taken to be the outcome of an attempt to express one function, especially a higher function, in terms of another; and one being, especially a higher being, in terms of another. Thus whoever attempts to express psychical phenomena in terms of physical may meet with immediate success; but later on his symbols will work out into contradictions. The limitations of such an attempt are no less obvious in any effort to express the functions of one sense by the functions of another—colour in terms of taste, *e.g.* ‘This is a *bitter* red’; or sound in terms of touch, ‘What a very *oblong* sonata’; or, still more, the objects of the intellect by objects of sense, *e.g.* ‘His book contains many *yellow* truths.’ Again, when we attempt to explain the functions of one psychical faculty by the functions of another, as when we would state volitional acts in intellectual terms, something overflows our terms; and this overflow remains as a seeming contradiction. Hence

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the air of insincerity or at least insufficiency about rational justifications or proofs of free-will; the reason being, not that the will is not free, but that freedom is an endowment and instinct of the will which refuses to be wholly explained or expressed by a mere intellectual concept. Equally unsatisfactory is any attempt to explain one function by another function of the same faculty. When under pressure from relentless reasoners we begin to state intuitions in terms of reflexion we are foredoomed to an intellectual deadlock. This deadlock, when it occurs in answer to persistent questionings, will really be chargeable to the questions much more than to their answer; in the same way that who-soever would attempt to answer the question, 'Is truth *weightier* than the world?' would be more excusable than he whose question it was. Thus to attempt to justify or even express by reflexion what we apprehend and assent to by intuition is fatuous even as an attempt. For as reason, however good, is not intuition, we need not be surprised if our intuitions overflow all our reasons and assert their autonomy by seeming to contradict all that has been brought to

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their defence. Lastly, as mysteries arise from the attempted substitution of one function for another, so do they arise from the substitution of one being for another. Any attempt—and yet must we not all make the attempt—to state the greater in terms of the less will lead, as Newman says, ‘to incompatible notions,’ especially if the greater be the Infinite, and the less be the narrow forms and phrases that accompany human thought. This is obvious in the higher mysteries. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is summed up in the phrase, ‘There are three Persons in one Divine Nature.’ It is at once clear that the word ‘nature,’ which is applicable to a block of granite as to God, is no complete receptacle for the idea of the Infinite. Nor is the word ‘person,’ with all its derivation from anthropology, more capable of expressing the infinity, distinction, and unity of the Three in One. Lastly, even the word ‘three,’ which seems to come home to us so nearly, stands not for quantitative number, which alone we are quite familiar with, but for transcendental, with its large margin of unexplored thought. Thus, every word singly and grouped in a phrase, whereby we express

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the Trinity, conveys a meaning which we can understand and believe. Yet together with what we believe and understand there is a selvage of unintelligibility which asserts itself as a kind of contradiction, reminding us of the necessary limitations of any attempt to confine the idea of the Infinite within the finite forms of anthropology and arithmetic.

We need hardly add that, except in this last example, we have employed the word 'Mystery' in its generic sense, as when we say 'the mysteries of free-will—the mysteries of a blade of grass—the mysteries of Nature.' Over and above this generic use, theologians take Mystery in a more restricted sense to mean a truth which transcends created intelligence to discover. Perhaps we might venture to suggest that the lowest class of mysteries are those which transcend the speculative but not the practical reason, or the reflexive but not the intuitional functions of the intelligence; and the second class, those which transcend all functions of the mind except apprehension and assent.

Perhaps one of the most important principles which the Church has at length made her own

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in this matter of faith, is the distinction between absolute and relative mysteries. The distinction was developed by St. Thomas, who saw that what some men could discover by reason, others had neither the leisure, the opportunities, nor the capabilities to reach except by faith. The absolutely supernatural is that which mankind as such cannot discover; the relatively supernatural is that which some men here or there cannot discover. To explain the absolutely supernatural we must recall what we said about the part played by the medium in human knowledge. Without a medium there can be no knowledge; with an imperfect medium there can be but imperfect knowledge; only with a perfect medium can there be full and perfect knowledge. Speaking generally, the course of our growth in knowledge is through phenomena to noumena, through appearances to substance, through effect to cause. Effects are therefore the medium for ascertaining the nature of causes. It is evident that the less or more we know of effects, the less or more we shall know of causes. To see the slight damage done by the circumference of a whirlwind, and to be ignorant of the

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havoc wrought by its vortex, will convey a true but inadequate notion of the force of wind. Moreover, much depends on the nature of the cause. If it is a necessary cause, as are all the natural forces of Nature, such as fire, heat, electricity, the careful collation and examination of the effects will lead us a long way towards a complete knowledge of the cause. But if it is a free agent, and our data are supplied from its external effects, we may indeed rise to the knowledge of the freedom, but not of the nature, of the free cause. Thus when we discover the traces of prehistoric man, the rude marks which reveal his existence and his intelligence tell us nothing of his character. When, then, we rise from the observation of cosmic phenomena to the necessity of an intelligent and free First Cause, the Universe, which is but a vast minor premiss for rising to God, reveals His presence and His power, but stops short of His inner nature. Human reason employing the Universe as its object can discover God's existence and as much of His nature as we need to form the subject of the propositions: 'God is, God is good, God is omnipotent, omniscient, intelligent, free, etc.' But no mere natural activity of the

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reason could discover that 'God is three Persons in one God,' or that 'Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.' There is thus an entire region of theological, psychological, and ethical truths which are within reach of human investigation and discovery; and another region which man's mind can never discover in default of a minor premiss wide enough to justify their acceptance. These truths are 'absolutely supernatural' with regard to the human mind, which in its natural workings is tied to inductive processes for the discovery and verification of new truths.

Yet even as every one who has human nature does not fulfil, or has not the opportunity for fulfilling, all the possibilities of human nature, so are there some or many who possess the endowment of reason without being favoured with an environment or a temperament suitable for developing their reason. We need not make a show of asserting that the roundness of the earth can be proved by man's reason, though not by the reason of a ploughman or a smith—of Titius or Caius. Nor need we toil to show that, although the existence of London or Paris is in itself a matter of eye-witness, yet for those who have

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never seen these two cities they remain a matter of hearsay and of faith. There are thus many truths which the mass of men cannot derive immediately from experience and reflection, but from trust in others whose opportunities and gifts have allowed them to gain experience and to foster it by reflection. Such of these truths as deal with divine realities we are accustomed to call the 'relatively supernatural.' Revelation or divine guarantee of their existence brings it about that they 'can, even in the present condition of man, be known by every one with facility, with firm assurance, and with no admixture of error.'¹ It would have been well had philosophers always borne in mind this distinction between the absolutely and relatively supernatural—the umbra and penumbra of the Infinite. Thus we should have been spared some of the needless discussions that have arisen over the existence of God, Freedom, Immortality. To be quite accurate these truths, though standing at the door of the supernatural, are not absolutely within its walls. They are discoverable by human reason. The idea of causality without which we

¹ *Conc. Vat. Cons. de Fide*, c. ii. Cf. Appendix 2.

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cannot give the world an intellectual setting, could and should lend the patient mind and the 'cor sincerum' to the existence of a supreme creative and directive Intelligence. Moreover, Freedom should be recognised as the fundamental instinct or impulse of the Will. And our persistence in being throughout all changes in our mode of being should be reckoned no more impossible than our existence; knowing that we are, we should not be surprised that we shall be. Yet these three truths which are taken to be the columns of theistic metaphysics and ethics, though not wholly immersed in the umbra of pure supernaturalism are yet within that penumbra, which is sometimes more perplexing and only less impenetrable than the deep shadow of Infinity. It is in the twilight, the chiaroscuro of truth that man's reason stumbles most. Utter darkness begets caution. But when light begins to leaven the darkness, caution, born of darkness, wanes; men take to thinking and moving, and with thought begins error, and with movement begins collision. Men still criticise the proofs for these three truths with some show of reason; and ask why the proofs which are set

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down in our 'Manuals of Philosophy' have never brought proof to men who doubt; and indeed seem to raise more difficulties, or at least discussions, than formal mysteries. We have only to answer that, whereas reason may discover these foundations of theism, we must never confound the mere syllogistic expression of a reasoning with that mysterious act of intelligence whereby the relations of a fact and of a principle are seen to issue forth in some other included fact. Moreover, Christian philosophy has the sanction of the Vatican Council for suggesting that, as men and methods stand, these proofs are not likely to bring conviction to the mass of men or even to the general run of thinking men. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that mere intellectual activity is not the only avenue of truth. Objective reality often depends as much upon the good-will as upon the unbiassed reason. Amongst the many truths, therefore, that lie within the speculative range of human attainment, there are some which men attain most frequently by way of authority rather than of discovery. Such truths are *de jure* natural, but *de facto* supernatural. They might come to all men by their

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own unaided toil; but they come to most men through tradition, reverence, obedience, faith, or any of those complex functions which some men reject, and wiser men approve, as springing from the personal will which acts for the whole of man, rather than from a mere intellectual source which speaks only for a section of man.

Amongst the *absolutely supernatural truths* are placed (1) The Trinity, (2) The Incarnation, (3) Original Sin, (4) Grace, (5) The Sacramental System, (6) Christian Priesthood, (7) Eternal Glory. Many interesting questions are found springing up under these heads of subjects. Is the doctrine of 'personal sin' a revelation? Is the forgiveness of sins? the resurrection of the body? etc. etc.

In *Ethics* no absolute revelation, as far as we know, has taken place. The Decalogue was revealed only as a reminder to the gradually waning conscience of man. The four cardinal virtues were truths known to pagan philosophy. Yet the three theological virtues are supernatural, if not in essence, at least in mode and object. In spite, however, of ethics being only relatively supernatural, the revelation of the Decalogue

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and its unflinching propagation by the Church has brought its truths home to millions of souls lying far beyond the reach of any mere speculative treatise on ethics. This is perhaps the reason why for one who reads and relishes a 'Prolegomena to Ethics,' thousands will read and relish the life of a hero or a saint, were it only a work of fiction. Mankind are more concerned with the duty of ethics than with its justification.

In *Psychology* many of the absolutely natural truths have been greatly spread by revelation and the preaching of the Church. The present writer has often marvelled to find that children, when intelligently questioned, show their thorough grasp of such subtle doctrines as the spirituality and immortality of the soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, by laying stress on the soul's distinction from the body, is a great aid to belief in its spirituality.

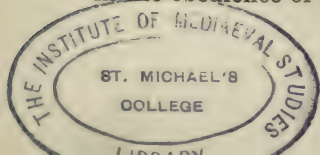
In *Natural Theology* the debt owed to revelation by absolutely natural truths is beyond count. That the First Cause is a Being of intelligence and love is probably a conclusion of reason. Yet how real becomes this conviction when we believe in the supreme intelligence of Creation

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and Providence, and the heroic love and self-sacrifice of Redemption. The Cross indeed is not only the power of God, but His wisdom and His love—overcoming all difficulties, answering all doubts, realising all aspirations.

Even in *Pure Metaphysics*, revelation has thrown light upon many natural truths, enabling simple minds to see and hold them. The distinction between the substance of a thing and its accidents—between what a thing is and what it seems—is the very basis of the ‘Mystery of Faith.’

Thus faith has two objects and two duties. It deals, first of all, with those mysteries of God’s and man’s being and activity which no natural fact is luminous enough to bring home to us. Its duty is to promulgate the absolutely supernatural. But since men do not as a rule act up to all the powers either of knowing or willing common to human nature, it deals, secondly, with other truths concerning the being and activity of the Creator and creature; not indeed to promulgate what the reason of man has itself promulgated, but to support what the reason of most men will fail to accept save at the bidding of a teacher and in the obedience of faith.



III

THE LIGHT OF FAITH

‘THE Catholic Church with one consent has ever held and does hold that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and object: in principle, because our knowledge in the one is by *natural reason*, and in the other by *divine faith*’ (*Conc. Vat. Constitut. Dogm. de Fide Catholica*, c. iv.).

We have taken it as proved that there is an order or body of truths which the cognoscitive faculties of man in their present state have power to accept when disclosed, but not to discover without being disclosed. Even as some men are unable, through want of mind, or opportunity, or time, to discover truths which other men discover and disclose to them; so are there truths which no body of men, nor any created thought could discover, were these truths not disclosed and vouched for by the Supreme Mind. We take it

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as a matter of certainty that the human mind can discover its own limits; that it can reason from the fact of a boundary to the fact of a beyond; and that therefore it can be assured of the existence of truths of which it can predicate existence but not essence, though of course some essence must be predicable of them if they exist.

With the sanction and guidance of the Vatican Council we may now push forward to consider the faculty whereby these undiscoverable truths may be held as true when once they are disclosed or revealed. The common teaching of the Church calls this faculty the 'Lumen Fidei,' the Light of Faith, which it contrasts with and distinguishes from the 'Lumen Rationis,' or Light of Reason. Before inquiring into the nature of this 'Light of Faith' we shall do well to bear in mind that its existence has been denied by many philosophers, who may be grouped into three classes: Ontologists, Agnostics, Rationalists.

To make this classification clear, we would remind our readers that the Supernatural Order may be considered in two ways: ontologically and logically. The 'ontological supernatural order'

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is an order of being standing outside finite being. Just as there are higher and lower, noble and less noble, perfect and less perfect beings, so there is a Highest, Best, Most Perfect, and therefore Infinite Being, which constitutes, so to say, a world in itself, and is the Ontological Supernatural Order. The 'logical supernatural order' is an order, not merely of beings, but of objects. We describe it with reference to our thought. Just as the 'ontological supernatural order' transcends all finite being, so does the 'logical supernatural order' transcend all finite thinking. No mere created thought can naturally, nor even supernaturally, fathom it.

It is evident that the existence of an order of being which transcends our thought, or at least our being, is not a matter of common consent. All those who agree with the Vatican Council in holding that Faith is an intellectual principle distinct from Reason, implicitly maintain the existence of an order of being beyond our finite being and our finite thought. In other words, they uphold the existence of an ontological, and therefore of a logical, supernatural order.

Those who differ from the Vatican Council we

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have already divided into Ontologists, Agnostics, Rationalists.

Ontologists partly agree and partly disagree with the Vatican Council: they agree, in holding the existence of the ontologically supernatural order; and disagree, in denying the existence of the logically supernatural order. Their history is well worthy of study. Beginning in the first ages of the Church, their doctrines have come down with varying fortunes even to our own days. Perhaps their powers of endurance and survival spring from that vein of mysticism which is so essential to their system. The common basis of all forms of Ontologism is the doctrine that the immediate object of man's thought is none other than God Himself. The Eunomians in the fourth century, and the Beguini and Beguardi of the thirteenth century, stated this doctrine with such undisguised frankness, and with such undesirable moral results, that the Council of Vienne (A.D. 1311) had no alternative but to condemn it. *Malebranche* made an effort to catholicise it by saying that it was not so much the essence as the attributes of God that formed the object of human thought. It is significant of the subtle

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fascination of ontologistic mysticism that such an accomplished thinker as Malebranche should find in his Cartesianism a new foothold for an error of the fourth century. Nor are we surprised that Cardinal Gerdil, a man of many accomplishments and deep piety, should undertake the defence of Malebranche. The last phase of Ontologism brings us in contact with the great name of Rosmini. Perhaps the inner and essential mysticism which underlies the ontologistic doctrines was necessary for a soul which felt, as he felt, the stress of modern revolutions. But his Ontologism was no mere loan from past ages. It became his own. He marked it with his own stamp of originality. His naturally subtle mind succeeded in deceiving itself as to the ontologistic leanings of his thought. But the Church could not sanction a mode of thought which exalted man's reason only at the expense of Reason and God. On December 14, 1887, forty propositions, culled from Rosmini's work, were condemned. We may judge of the subtlety which accompanied this last phase of Ontologism by two of the condemned propositions: 'The being which is the object of intuition is the initial being of all beings. . . . It

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is the beginning of God, as He is known to us, and of all creatures' (Prop. ix.). 'Initial being is part of the Word. The mind of the Father does not distinguish it really but only logically from the Word' (Prop. vii.).

Agnostics disagree both with the Vatican Council and with ontologists in doubting of the ontologically supernatural; but agree with the Vatican Council in affirming the logically supernatural. By a process of reason somewhat difficult to account for, they seem to consider mysteries possible and faith impossible.

Rationalists, by denying the ontologically supernatural, disagree with the Vatican Council and with ontologists who affirm it, and with agnostics who merely doubt of it; and agree with ontologists and agnostics by denying the logically supernatural. By rationalists we must not be taken to mean any one homogeneous and organised body of thinkers. Rationalism is a phase, rather than a school, of thought. Its one common doctrine is that man's natural cognoscitive powers are capable of unlocking all truth. To rationalists there are no mysteries. Having joined on this common basis they part

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into a number of systems ranging from the Materialism of Haeckel to the Subjectivism of Kant and the Transcendentalism of Hegel.¹

We may now go on to explain the nature of this 'Light of Faith' which the Vatican Council distinguishes from the 'Light of Reason.' A short psychological introduction will be necessary to clear the ground. As Thomists we need not state that we hold the existence of bodily organs and spiritual faculties. Our inner consciousness seems to tell us that as thinking is not acting, nor willing performing, nor thinking willing, so must we believe that the understanding is not really and truly the will, even though we must will to think and think to will. To us the distinction between the cognoscitive and appetitive faculties is quite as real, though of course not so physical, as the distinction between brain and heart. Yet for the purposes of explaining the 'Light of Faith,' the reality of this distinction may be waived. Without delaying to prove or even assume that the intellect is really not the will, we would lay stress on the fact that it is the intellect rather than the will which

¹ Cf. Appendix 3.

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contains the 'Light of Reason' and the 'Light of Faith.'

In saying this we must not be taken to mean that the reason contains the 'Light of Reason,' though it is just possible we might be justified by psychology. The word we have used is not *reason* but *intellect*. For it is questionable whether any psychological term does duty for so many distinct ideas as reason. Sometimes reason stands for man's intellectual cognoscitive power which we have signified by the word intellect. Sometimes it stands for the faculty, not of pure understanding, but of ratiocination. Sometimes it stands not for a faculty but for an act of reasoning. Sometimes it stands neither for a faculty nor an act but for a motive, as when we give reasons for our acts. Sometimes it signifies not a motive but a motive power; not final but efficient causes, as when we say that the pressure of our hand is the reason why the door moves. Sometimes it means not faculty, nor act, nor motive power, but something apparently made up of faculty and motive and act, as when we adjudicate between the claims of reason and faith. To avoid this confusion we have not

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employed the word 'reason' but 'intellect' to signify the faculty in which reside the Light of Reason and the Light of Faith.

The term 'Light of Reason' may best be explained by an example which might even be called an analogy. Physiologists tell us of bodily organs that as far as science goes are perfect, yet through the lack of some vital influx are useless. An eye may be quite blind, an ear deaf, a limb powerless through some defect which is an object of inference rather than of observation. An organ may thus be with or without that vitality which completes it. This distinction between an organ and its vitality is applied to psychical faculties. Logically, if not really, we distinguish between the faculty of the intellect and that vitality or light without which it could not act. St. Thomas terms this light the *habitus primorum principiorum*, the habit of first principles. Some of his followers have gone so far as to maintain that this 'habit' is really distinct from the faculty, *i.e.* the intellect, in which it resides. We venture to suggest to modern psychologists who are still more or less influenced by the Kantian analysis of *a priori*

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forms of thinking, that the scholastic habit of first principles is worth examining. In their sane realism these scholastics clearly distinguished between what the mind makes within itself and outside itself. They considered that as the ear cannot perceive light-waves but sound-waves, nor the eye perceive sound-waves but light-waves, so the intellect does not deal with the objects of the will as such, nor the will deal with the objects of the intellect as such. Moreover, as the ear does not make the sound-waves nor the eye the light-waves—*i.e.* as the organ does not make its own object though it has its own object—so neither do the intellectual or appetitive faculties make their objects, though the object of the intellect is not the object of the will. An example from acoustics may make this clearer. Helmholtz recognised that ordinary musical notes were not simple units of sound, but a subtle synthesis of a dominant note and of many harmonic and enharmonic overtones. To prove this he invented ‘resonance globes’ which were made to resound to one particular note. On placing a group of these globes near a sounding object, the various overtones of its

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apparently simple sound were made audible. No one on hearing these overtones would conclude that the resonating globes had created the overtones. Each had singled out the tone to which it vibrated, and had responded to it. But the overtones were there before being responded to. In the same way the 'Light of Reason' or habit of first principles, or *a priori* forms of intuition and reasoning do not make objects. The Light of Reason is not an active force for creating truths but for recognising them.

We are thus led on to conclude that each living organ or faculty may see its own particular object in one and the same fact or thing. When one man speaks to another the ear is conscious of sound, not of colour or shape, and the eye is conscious of shape and colour, but not of sound; the intellect is conscious of something that must be understood, the will is conscious of something that must be loved or hated. No object is exhausted by one faculty. There is no being in Nature that appeals merely to the touch, or taste, or smell, or hearing, or sight, or imagination, or intellect, or will. When the ear is filled with hearing the eye may be filled with

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seeing. Thus each faculty may find its own object in one and the same thing. Not only so, but by discipline or by the formation of habits a faculty may largely increase or change its power of perception. To the untrained ear the symphonies of Beethoven are simple discord; to the untrained eye the masterpieces of Giotto or Fra Angelico are barbarous; to the untrained imagination the poems of Dante or Crashaw are unendurable; to the untrained mind the *Summa* is sophistry; to the untrained will heroic sanctity is fanaticism. Let the *Adoro Te Devote* be read with the eloquence of Bossuet to one who does not understand Latin, and it sounds gibberish; let a ploughman hear a lecture on Differential Calculus, and he will thank God he is a ploughman. For one and the same faculty, then, new powers may be developed by use and habit.

An important question at once suggests itself for examination. Over and above the 'Light of Reason,' or habit of first principles, or *a priori* forms of thinking, is it possible to have another Light? Is it possible to look at the same object, and especially at the highest objects, in another

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and perhaps higher way? Does our congenital power of perception entirely exhaust the objects we know? If we confess that the higher the faculties of our mind the more do they recognise objects which they cannot fathom, are these objects not fully known to any mind? And if through any discipline of thought and will we could be brought into harmony and union with that mind, might not some fresh light be thrown not merely on those things we seem to know fully, but especially on those things which we 'see through a glass darkly'? In other words, is the 'Light of Faith' possible?

When dealing with the Object of Faith, we laid it down as a law that the higher the faculty the greater was its power to recognise what it could not fully fathom. Stated shortly, the higher the faculty the greater its supernatural object. We should be led to expect that as few possibilities in nature are without fulfilment, there must be some means of enabling these higher faculties to reach and embrace their supernatural object. And, strangely enough, our reasoning is confirmed by the fact. Our metaphysical deduction is sound psychology. The sense of touch, for example,

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perceives little or nothing which it cannot fully touch; nor has it any capability, nor any need for a capability, of reaching to a supernatural habit. The same may be said, with slight differences, of the sense of smell and taste. But the sense of hearing has a power of detecting sounds which it cannot distinguish, as the roar of a distant cannon, or the ping of a rifle at close quarters, the cry of an animal or a man, the cheer of a friend or a foe. Moreover, the hearing can be almost indefinitely strengthened by art. Instruments have been made enabling it to recognise the faintest sounds, or to isolate overtones. The telephone enables the ear to hear sounds that have been carried over hundreds of miles. Yet the sense of hearing must yield to the sense of sight, both for the extent of the supernatural object, and its capability of being strengthened to know still more of that object. The eye of itself can see the heavens which it cannot fathom; it can see insects which, as it knows, possess minute organs beyond its powers; it can see a living or at least a moving object in the distance which it cannot certainly decide to be a passing shadow, a wild beast, or a man. How wonderful

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are the powers which science has added to this noble sense! Microscopes and telescopes have added a new world—or rather ten thousand new worlds—to the ‘harvest of the seeing eye.’ Most scientists would willingly lose one eye rather than lose, if it were possible, the power of being helped by microscope or telescope, so great is the new aid granted to sight. So, too, how marvellous are the new powers granted by art and training to the untutored imagination. Between the rude outbursts of untrained fancy and the polished verse of Shakespeare what a world of difference! If continuity is one of the laws of Nature, and if Induction is ever valid, must we not conclude that the intellect as it is the highest faculty must have the greatest supernatural object, and moreover the greatest capability of being raised to reach that object. In other words, the whole analogy of our cognoscitive faculties, as it leads us to expect mysteries which the pure unaided intellect can discern but cannot fathom, leads us also to feel that the intellect might be helped from without to powers of penetrating behind the veil. In other words, the Light of Faith is not merely something that might be given, but some-

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thing that could be withheld only by seeming to break a law of our being, and to thwart one of the strongest and most abiding expectations of our mind and will.

When, then, we find that the existence of this Light of Faith has been affirmed in all ages—and by millions of men—and these not the most ignorant nor the most depraved, but the most cultivated and upright, and in spite of persecutions, and in the face of temptations; when, moreover, we find that though nations have grown slack in believing, no nation that once believed has ever died until its beliefs drooped or were degraded into mere world-worship; when we are met by the fact that the spread of modern education has not done away with men's faith in God, but revived it and given it another proud page of history and still higher hopes for the future, we are led on to ask those who say that they have it, what they take it to be, and whose gift it is, that it should live on when so many other visible forces that made a great show in their day are now no more. But if in disregard for ages and ages of believers, we are minded to look on faith not as a belief in what cannot be seen, but as a belief in what

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should not be believed, our question is changed, not answered. We no longer ask why men—and these the best men—believe in God, but why they believe in faith; why, after ages and ages of progress in one way and another, men are found to hold that they have within them a power of outrunning reason and conquering a still wider field of the mysteries of Infinity. This is the old question in a new and perhaps more human form. And it must be answered, as of old, by those to whom faith is the very atmosphere of an unseen and higher intellectual and spiritual life. To them alone must we go; no others volunteer to be our guides. If we refuse to hear them we are thrown on conjecture. But if we listen to them, and if their report is coherent, and if it seems to fall in with what we know, or complete what we have ourselves discovered, or answer most of our doubts, or give point to most of our longings; if our mind is stilled by it with a sense of unity and fullness, and if our heart is warm within us as we hear the words of those who profess merely to give a halting account of what faith does within them,—then perhaps may we realise what it is, and whence it comes, and with what earnestness

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it must be kept by those who have it, and sought by those who know its greatness only by hearsay.

Those who profess to have faith agree that it is nothing that a man can make or win for himself. It is ever one of God's gifts. They do not mean to say that a man may fold his hands, or go his way unconcerned, and that God will send His gift after him as an arrow from a bow. They tell us we must ask, seek, knock, before the door is opened to us. Yet is the door of faith ever opened upon us from its heavenward side. In obedience to the principle, 'The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence,' we must try to take faith by storm; and in a measure we may think that it has yielded to our attack. Yet the Infinite cannot capitulate; it can only betray itself. To borrow the words of St. Thomas:—

' In mortem a discipulo
Suis *tradendus* aemulis
Prius in vitae ferculo
Se tradidit discipulis.'

When God finds a soul that wishes to be His 'discipulus,' He betrays Himself ('se tradidit') into his heart and mind. Such souls may have gone through a long or short period of struggle

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for the faith; they may seem, like St. Paul, to have been born a Roman citizen, or, like Festus, to have bought the privilege at a great price; yet the Infinite cannot be bought, He can only be given away. Or if there seems to be a purchase, He ever remains so far beyond the purchase price as to be the bargain of bargains. 'What exchange shall a man give for his soul?' Above all, 'What exchange shall a man give for God?'

Shall we therefore discount all preparation of heart for the gift of faith? Is it all to no purpose that whereas Peter and John and the rest of the twelve were brought over at a glance, Nicodemus wrought out the problem of his faith during a three years' agony of doubt? Surely we may be allowed to think that because in the dawn of faith the act of God remains supreme, the act of man is not therefore superfluous. On the contrary, the co-operation of the human will is indispensable. Later on, when dealing more directly with the phenomena and laws of conversion, we shall be called upon to look more closely into the reasons why some are called at a moment's notice and some obey only after years of call. But for the moment it should be borne

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in mind that preparation of heart must go before the final act whereby God gives the light of faith. The human will must lay the faggots and the victim for the sacrifice, even when the consuming fire is sent from on high.

Those who have, or who say they have, this divine gift assure us that whatever moral preparation is needed for it, it is essentially an intellectual gift. To them faith is an endowment of sight. They make their own the words of the Psalmist, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path' (Ps. cxix. 105). Whilst they are often taken to be plunged in darkness they know themselves to be in the light. Not that it is day everywhere. They do not pretend to have seen more than a little of God's ways. What they now see is light in comparison with what they saw before; even though this light of day is little better than deep darkness in comparison with what still remains to be seen.

All agree that this light is in their mind. It is something in their intellect and added to it. It is a divine second sight, enabling them to see the Infinite within His creatures. It is a gift that leads them to take God's point of view, to look at

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worldly phenomena as related to the ultimate Efficient and Final Cause.

Theology adds that faith is an intellectual habit, as the science of a scientist or the language of an interpreter. It is thus something which depends, as it has depended greatly, on our own exertions. Just as a man may have a clear judgment yet gradually allow it to be warped by his affections, or biassed by his interests, or stifled by his passions, or atrophied by disuse, or on the other hand perfected by daily practice, so may a man have faith and add to its precision or intensity or fervour, or on the other hand allow it to wane and die through disuse or actual abuse.

Moreover, because it is a habit, faith is thereby a 'second nature.' Its action is in a measure automatic and instinctive. It is not indeed a new faculty, nor a sixth sense, nor a second intellect, but it is something of a new instinct. Being added to the reason, or as the scholastics would say, being actually 'subjected' in the intellect, and being thus psychologically an endowment and perfection of the reason in certain spheres of thought, it is not merely the ally but the master of reason in these spheres. It does not submit to reason, even

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when employing reason. Flowing from this likeness which it has to a 'second nature' is its peculiar manner of acting. It is more akin to intuition than to reflection. Whilst laying down this principle we must be accepted with the necessary qualifications. Faith, whilst more intuitive than reflexive, and more given to assent than inference, is nevertheless not intuition. It is not the *direct* vision of any truth, or certainly not of the highest truths. We must not confound it with that false ontological mysticism which covets and claims face-to-face union with the eternal truth. It is the sober and accurate teaching of St. Thomas, that when face-to-face vision takes place, faith is superseded.

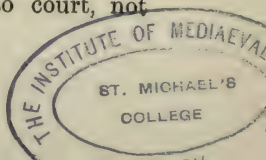
And because faith is intuitive rather than reflexive, certain well-marked phenomena accompany its mode of action. It is not always helped out by the alleged reasons for its acceptance. Whilst dealing with the Object of Faith we suggested that a mystery, or in other words an intellectual deadlock, might arise out of the attempt to express one function in terms of another. Thus it is almost incredible how unsatisfactory the use of our external senses

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appears when we seek to express their intuitions in terms of reflexion. Have we never read certain authors who try to justify the use of their senses by a syllogism, viz.: All that the external senses convey is true.

But the external senses convey the impression of a stone: therefore, there is a stone.

It will be seen at once that sceptics of the acute logical type would look upon this as a clumsy attempt at sophistical reasoning. For the major is by no means evident, and, assuredly, not true. Moreover, even when upheld by its supporters, it must be defended by so many nice distinctions of 'per se' and 'per accidens,' and the rest, that the general law seems of little use whatever in concrete matters. Moreover, the minor is not beyond cavil. To assent to it—if we are to reason about all our assents—we need other principles, and these require others *ad infinitum*, like the infinite images of two confronting mirrors. The whole difficulty is not in the answer but in the question, not in the result but in the effort. Intuition is a higher function than reflexion. It should be the judge, not the defendant. Reason must be called into court, not



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intuition. When then we try to express intuitions in terms of reflexion, an intellectual deadlock results from our quixotic attempt. Yet men will go on superstitiously thinking that no assents should circulate without the *imprimatur* of a syllogism. Now we are far from saying that this syllogistic statement of an intuition is invalid. On the contrary, we hold that it is valid. But except to those who would hold the conclusion without the premisses it is as good as useless. It is a formula for a concrete mental fact. Only those who know the fact can see the full content of the formula. Moreover, as formulas are sometimes useful to those whose knowledge of the fact serves to correct the limitations of the formula, so may a syllogism be a handy method of formulating our convictions for the purposes of pure abstract thinking.

All this should shed light on the inter-relations of the Light of Reason and the Light of Faith. It is notorious how insufficient are the alleged reasons of those who have the faith. Some of us rise from the reading of the many 'Reasons for becoming a Christian' with a prayer for faith. To our mind the earnest convert has been won over

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to belief, not by the reasons he alleges, but in spite of them. The truth is, that the vital act of faith being intuitive rather than reflexive, the attempt to provide reasons is calculated to provide difficulties. This does not mean that certain truths which lead to faith are not within the powers of reason. We have already made clear, we hope, the wide province marked out for the jurisdiction of reason. But the real objects of faith which we can hold only by believing are outside this province, and beyond all our reasonings. It is, perhaps, with a view to accentuate this that the New Testament shows the Apostles, the Pillars of Faith, converted at a glance.

Reasons for the faith have an important function, which we must not underrate nor exaggerate because it is chiefly negative. They must ever remain a necessity whilst they confine themselves to prove, not the truth, but the possibility and likelihood and fittingness of what revelation alone can attest. If I may make a personal confession, having read almost all the stories of conversion which have come my way, I have continually felt much more difficulty in going through books purporting to give the line

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of argument which leads to the certainty of faith, than those other less scholarly books describing the events, sometimes trivial and often irrelevant, which in point of fact brought their writers to the feet of Christ. I humbly acknowledge that, to my mind, a mere intellectual statement of the reasons for faith lacks something which would make it appeal to flesh and blood. But I rarely tire of reading those human documents, of untrained ratiocination and imperfect literary finish, wherein faith is shown to come as the result of some temptation faced and overthrown, some loss bravely borne, some sorrow accepted and welcomed for the love of Him who bore our sorrows on the Tree.

Here we have reached a principle of theology which opens up many wide views. Faith, in a peculiar way, is linked with charity. Without loving God we may, indeed, believe in Him; but our faith will be as good as dead. Unless love comes to raise it from the dead it will lie lifeless in our souls. Living faith is then the absolute intellectual trust given by the mind of a created person to the mind of a Divine Person, whom it loves even more than it knows. Indeed, in order

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that this strong personal relationship might be all the more strengthened, a Divine Person, as we are taught, came on earth and took the reality of a human nature and all the semblance of a human personality, whilst still remaining the one Divine Person of the Son. Faith is now no longer, if indeed it ever was, a conviction based on argument, but on obedience, and still more on love for the Person of God. And because affection is primarily the outcome of instincts and intuitions, it cannot express itself fully by any apparatus of reasoning. No one argues himself into love. Men are represented as being born to it, or caught by it, or falling into it, or fighting against it, or yielding to it—not as studying for it, or arguing towards it, or being persuaded to it. As far as we know nature, love wheresoever found is not found to rest on a syllogism. And if a man proceeded to set down the ‘reasons’ that led him to a conviction that his affections ought to be engaged, the world would shrewdly conclude that his heart was still free from all true affection. Living faith, that is, a faith by which a man lives and for which he would die, shares in the mysteriousness of our love for God. We take

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God's word for things, not because He seems to have reasons on His side, but simply because it never occurs to us to doubt what He says. Our living convictions are not the results of a syllogism, nor even of a convergence of probabilities, but of our trust and of our love. Living light is in our mind because love is in our hearts. We said that faith was not the vision of anything. We had almost wished this unsaid. For if faith is a light, it would seem to bring something to view. What then would that something be? May we not hazard the opinion that, when the words of God are spoken to the mind of the believing soul, the light he has within him shows him whose tongue has spoken, and whose will he must follow, if he be minded to hearken and do the truth?

IV

AUTHORITY

‘MAN being wholly dependent upon God, as upon his Creator and Lord, and created reason being absolutely subjected to Uncreated Truth, we are bound to yield to God, by faith in His revelation, the full obedience of our intelligence and will. And the Catholic Church teaches that this faith, which is the beginning of man’s salvation, is a supernatural virtue whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He has revealed are true; not because the intrinsic truth of the things is plainly perceived by the natural light of reason, but *because of the authority of God Himself who reveals them and who can neither be deceived nor deceive*. For “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not”’ (*Conc. Vat. Const. Dogm. de Fide Catholica*, c. iii.).

In speaking of the Object and of the Light of

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Faith we have dealt with the two internal elements or constituents of the intellectual act of belief. Faith, however, differs from every other intellectual act inasmuch as it does not come into direct touch with its objects. Between the object and the faculty there is a third element of *Authority*, which, so to say, unites the knowing faculty and the known object together. We are thus called upon to consider the vast and difficult subject of Authority, and particularly of that infallible Authority which guarantees the act of faith. Our thoughts will be confined to three main heads: the nature of Authority in general and of infallible Authority in particular; the need of an infallible Authority; the extent of infallible Authority.

Authority is a word which has not always an acceptable sound. To the minds of some it comes to mean a yoke. Yet its genealogy should recommend it. *Author* is surely not a word of merely despotic import. It means direction, guidance, growth, increase, and is suggestive of the creative power of the poet (*ποιητης*) or maker.

It is strange to find the idea of authority applied to two such distinct provinces of activity

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as that of the mind and that of the will, the spheres of thought and deed. Yet we have moral authority controlling the will, and intellectual authority controlling the mind. Both these kinds of authority, whilst possessing their own characteristics, agree in a fundamental concept which allows them to be classified under one heading. Authority in general is that power which has a right to the last word. It is the final court of appeal. Thus in matters of policy or action the supreme authority has the right to say the last and decisive word, and as the phrase goes, 'lay down the law.' Sometimes this final court of appeal is settled by nature, sometimes by acquirements, sometimes by free choice. Men find themselves born with a tribunal within them which demands, though it cannot always compel, obedience; punishing any denial of its authority with severe penalties. In purely speculative matters the mind of man is ultimate judge. Though it can reach outer reality only through the senses, and though they are consequently witnesses conveying information to it, yet it never lays aside its supreme judicial function. It weighs evidence, compels attention, compares

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the information of one sense with the information of another, reconsiders and even corrects false impressions, makes allowances for a disturbed state of the feelings, sums up and passes the final judgment, because it has the natural right or authority to do so.

In matters of action the will is the final authority whose jurisdiction has been pre-arranged by nature. Just as the intellect or mind has a directive authority over the various lower cognoscitive faculties of man, so has the will (*voluntas*) a real directive authority over the lower appetites and emotions. It can control them, turn aside their attention, remove their object, check any excess of emotion, concentrate attention, and bend the energies of our being towards a goal of its own choice. If either the reason or the will, but especially the will, is disobeyed, disobedience is punished by penalties of no light nature. A mind long invaded and swayed by the frowardness of the senses comes at length to a pitiable state of indecision. Whereas it should weigh evidence, it is swayed by sensible impressions, and, chosen by nature to be the final court of appeal, every latent sensa-

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tion has power to reverse its decisions. Still more pitiable is the state of a soul in which the authority of the will or the conscience is successfully disputed. Lower emotions and desires, once they have obtained the victory, are not slow to set up a tyranny which is a grievous humiliation and pain, or at least punishment to the soul. Anarchy succeeds to disenthroned authority. A man through want of control over his lower faculties may, to use the strong word of Jesus Christ, LOSE his soul. Even when it has not passed from his sight, it may pass from his hold.

In social unities, such as a family, an army, a kingdom, there must be a like intellectual and moral authority, with a like power of giving the final judgment and of enforcing this judgment by penalties. An anarchy, even when formed of the most intellectual or most upright individual members, is doomed to a speedy death or a fruitless existence. The communities where authority flourishes without tyranny are everywhere the strongest and best. Tyranny with its usurped authority is stronger and perhaps better than mere anarchy; for even the distorted shadow is better than the entire lack of authority.

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If we were to ask ourselves what gives one faculty, or individual, or class the right to claim authority, we should answer by asking what gives a faculty, or individual, or class the right to have the last word, and thus to set the rule and be the 'ruler.' If we might generalise, we should say that whatever or whoever sees farthest, or takes the widest view, or represents the most or highest interests, has a right to authority. In matters of knowledge the intellect sees more than the senses. Sight, the most perfect of the senses, deals merely with the form and colour of objects, hearing with their sound; whereas the intellect can deal with objects as being extended, coloured, audible, because it can deal with them as objects, and indeed as mere beings. In valuational judgments, where due weight has to be placed on outcomes and aims and ends, the reason is again supreme. It alone can consider the last end, because it alone has the power of summoning back the first beginnings. It can deal with the Final Cause since it can trace things back to their first Efficient Cause. Then when it is a matter of deciding, not what shall be thought nor what shall be thought best, but what shall be done,

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the rational will is supreme, because, so to say, it takes the widest view. Essentially an appetitive faculty, it does not minister to this faculty or that; it does not look after the interests, or, as scholastics say, 'the good,' of the eye or the ear or the brain or the imagination, or of any department of the human powers; it looks after the whole interests of the person, it sees to the good of the whole, it decides to do what may demand much from this faculty or that, from the ear or the eye or the brain or the body or the imagination; yet it only decides upon what it thinks will be good 'on the whole,' and for its own being as a whole. It is the guardian of the whole personality, and hence it has authority over those faculties which are concerned with the functions of only a part. It is the personal will, and as such its duty is to stimulate, regulate, control, repress, discipline the functions of each separate faculty in the interests and for the good of the whole concrete personality. So, too, in social personalities such as a family, army, kingdom, the father, general, or king is officially bound to take the widest outlook, and thereby to have authority. Their power is in proportion to their

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responsibility. They must be obeyed because they look after the interests, not of this or that individual or section, but for the welfare of their whole charge.

Moral authority should be clearly distinguished from intellectual authority. Not only is it distinct in source and effect, but in the laws that affect or accompany its exercise. Wheresoever found, whether in concrete or collective personalities, it is rooted in a will. Not that the exercise of will-power is ever dissociated from the exercise of intellectual power; but as intellect is not will, though the two are inseparable, so are the two spheres of action quite distinct, though so intertwined as almost to be indistinguishable. The effect of moral authority in the subjects of it, as in the children of a family, the soldiers of an army, the citizens of a state, is obedience, which may be defined as 'a subject's readiness of will to carry out the lawful will of his superior.' In other words, it is submissiveness of will. But the effect of intellectual authority is *knowledge*. If the intellectual authority is of the highest order, and our recognition of it is full, the resultant *knowledge* becomes *certitude*. Thus my present

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knowledge of the existence of Japan, though dependent entirely on authority, is a certitude. If the authority is weak, or if it is strong and our recognition of it is weak, our knowledge is not certitude but opinion or persuasion. A good deal of unnecessary confusion is caused by contrasting Authority and Reason without any very clearly marked definition of either. Thus the writer of the *Foundations of Belief* somewhat mars a brilliant chapter on Authority and Reason by giving no satisfactory definition of either. 'Authority, as I have been using the term, is in all cases contrasted with Reason, and stands for that group of non-rational causes, moral, social, and educational, which produces its results by psychic processes other than reasoning.'¹ It will be remarked that the author does not give us a clear definition of Reason, which, technically speaking, means the ratiocinative or discursive, rather than the intuitive or apprehensive, faculty. If we keep strictly to his definition our intuitions all depend on authority; for, assuredly, intuition is a 'non-rational' act of knowledge. Moreover, authority has not been distinguished as moral

¹ Part iii. ch. ii. p. 232; 8th edition.

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and intellectual, though, I dare say, we might presume that the author of a work on Belief must be occupied with intellectual authority rather than moral. Again, when he writes that this 'Authority . . . produces its results by psychic processes other than reasoning,' are we to understand by these results obedience or certitude? Were we to judge by what he writes further on, we should be at a loss to know whether he clearly distinguishes the two kinds of authority. He writes: 'Again, I do not think it would be regarded as forced to talk of the "authority of public opinion" or the "authority of custom." . . . "He submitted to the authority of a stronger will." . . . "No doubts were ever entertained, no inconvenient questions were ever asked, about the propriety of a practice which was enforced by the authority of unbroken custom."' ¹ In all or in most of these examples it is evident that authority does not necessarily mean an external mind creating certitude, but an external will winning obedience. The authority of custom and of a 'stronger will' leaves a man's opinion quite unchanged, whilst bending his will and action.

¹ Note, p. 244.

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The distinction between moral and intellectual authority is not a mere subtlety, but something of daily importance in human affairs. Thus there may be certain natural or collective personalities with power to control our will and demand obedience, but with no power over our thoughts. A father, a general, and the State must be obeyed, in some cases even with the gravest risks to life. Yet it would be wrong to consider that because men have a right to control our actions they have therefore any official right to control our thoughts, or at least that they have any official endowment for begetting certitude in our minds. Superiors, whilst demanding submission of will, must not thereupon demand submission of mind. Indeed, obedience and submission to authority are most perfect and praiseworthy when an inferior submits his will, so to say, in spite of his judgment. The true hero is one who obeys, and rides fearlessly into 'the jaws of death' without 'reasoning why,' even when his whole instinct is that the command laid on him is a blunder. And it would be cruel to compel such a hero not merely to lose his life, but to depose his mind by thinking that the blunder was the best possible

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move and an act of consummate generalship. And as there are some who have power over our wills but not over our minds, there are others who have power over our minds and not over our wills. By their knowledge and their gifts of teaching they control our opinions, mould our thoughts, dispel prejudices, create an attitude of mind, answer difficulties, and help us on towards the truth; or if their own powers are turned away from the truth, they may create in us false opinions and lead our minds astray. Sometimes authorities may endeavour to go beyond their jurisdiction, or persons representing the two kinds of authority may be in opposition. Thus an authority which has a right to obedience may endeavour to exact intellectual submission; and those who have the power or right to use intellectual influence may try to capture our wills. In times of war it is quite enough that the patriot should give his services to his country; into the extremely concrete and difficult matter of the justice of the war he need not be expected to enter. Again, on the other hand, subtle arguments may be brought by a clever disputant to prove that love of country is folly. In such cases, and with

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such disputants, had we answers for every argument, and could we match subtlety with subtlety, our best refutation of them or defence of ourselves would always be some determined act of loyalty and love.

To explain still further the nature of intellectual authority we must contrast the act of Belief with that of Intuition and Reasoning. The act of reasoning is perhaps the most accurately analysed of the three; no doubt, because it is so much more lengthy a process than either intuition or belief, and the soul has time to make accurate observations of its workings. In its syllogistic or deductive form it is, roughly speaking, a progress of the mind from a principle to a fact; in its inductive form it is a progress of the mind from a fact or a group of facts to a principle. It will be noticed that in both these exercises of its power it is not ultimate. *Intuitions*, either of fact or of principle, must supply the ground of its activity. No doubt philosophers of a certain way of thinking are inclined to look upon reason as the supreme and even the unique arbiter of thought. Were they to think more deeply, they would recognise that reason strictly

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so-called has but a limited function, and that whatever else it may or may not be, it is certainly not the last intellectual court of appeal, resting as it does on intuitions either of fact or principle. We have said 'reason strictly so-called,' because we would go so far as to suggest that even when 'reason' means no more than the intellectual faculty with its ratiocinative and intuitive faculties it is not the supreme arbiter of thought, or at least not of truth. Thus in matters of fact, intuition is the slave of fact. It is the phenomenon that is master. The fact, the being that has the last word, the ultimate court of appeal—in a word, the authority—is outside the faculty. Again, in matters not of fact but of principle, it is hard to think that these are not in great part derived from facts rather than from our faculties. Psychologically there are not a few principles that depend on the mind only for their promulgation. We need not go further than the science of ethics, which rests on the principles of the Decalogue; and these principles, psychologically speaking, are merely the ten primary instincts of a goodwill expressed in terms of the intellect. Yet because the mind is their trans-



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lator, it has acquired no right to pose as their author. Again, even in purely non-ethical principles, such as the Permanence of Energy, the Law of Causality, the primary office of the mind is to give ungrudging assent to the unverifiable principle of the rationality of the universe. But we may well ask ourselves what is the recognition of the rationality of the external world if not the recognition of the authority of an external mind? To some philosophers it would appear to be nothing more or less than the affirmation of our own internal mind; but in this case, it is hard to see how the existence of an external world becomes more than a paradox. But accepting, as I feel we are bound to accept, the rationality of the universe as one of our most fundamental postulates of all reasoning and of all intuition, it is clear that reason and intuition contain no little admixture of the element of authority.

From the conviction that human thought in two most characteristic workings is not wholly independent of external authority, we are led to recognise the nature and therewith the reasonableness of belief, which differs from reason and intuition in being, not partially but wholly,

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dependent on external authority. Belief is acceptance of facts or principles by a mind to which they are not directly evident, on the authority of another mind to which they are directly evident. Such being the definition of belief, it is clear that the act of believing is one of the most complex psychological functions. For before a mind can be recognised as an authority by and to another mind, it must first be recognised as possessing, not merely certain intellectual, but certain moral qualifications. In mere intuition or mere ratiocination the active mind must abstract itself from moral qualities and deal with the mere intellectual side of facts and principles. The facts of chemistry, the principles of anatomy, have no real relation either to the moral level of the student or the teacher or the solitary and self-taught thinker. But before a mind consents to accept a truth which it does not see on the word of another mind, it must be assumed that the guaranteeing mind not only sees the fact or principle as it is, but also expresses it as it is seen. It is far otherwise with the facts or principles which are gathered from phenomena. Light cannot sham darkness. Oxygen cannot

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disguise itself as hydrogen. The rule of three cannot transform itself into a denial of the addition table. The Law of Causality cannot produce a mere formless chaos. But, on the other hand, though facts are never untrue, minds may take an untrue view of facts. Oxygen is not hydrogen, but some persons through ignorance may take one for the other. Untruth has a second source; this time not in the mistaken mind, but in the ill-will, *i.e.* not through an untrue impression but through an untruthful expression. To admit the authority of another mind, then, it must be recognised as understanding the truth of what it says, and to say the truth regarding what it understands. Only when we are certain that true impression is linked with true expression can we lawfully yield our mind to the guidance of authority. Scholastics have summed up this teaching in saying that all intellectual authority must have *veritas in cognoscendo* (*i.e.* logical truth), and *veritas in dicendo* (*i.e.* moral truthfulness).

Accordingly, intellectual authority may be defined as 'a mind which is recognised as giving a truthful and true account to other

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minds of truths which it does and they do not see.'

The intellectual Authority or Mind on whom believers rest their faith is none other than God Himself. It is needless to prove that in Him the finite mind may find those intellectual and moral qualities, or, in other words, that personality, on which it can set its trust. Not only is He the Supreme Ontological Truth (*Veritas in Essendo*), but also the supreme Logical Truth and Moral Truthfulness. Infinite Being, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Truthfulness that He is, He alone can guarantee absolute assurance with regard to these mysteries on which the Infinite is pillioned. No clearer expression of this could be found than in the words of the Vatican Council which we quoted at the opening of this Conference. The conciliar Fathers lay it down that faith enables us to hold certain things as true 'not because the intrinsic truth of the things is plainly perceived by the natural light of reason' (*i.e.* by natural intuitions or reasonings from natural intuitions) 'but *because of the authority of God Himself*, Who can neither be deceived, nor deceive,' *i.e.* by the Supreme Being, Who is the

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First Logical Truth and Moral Truthfulness. The final and complete motive why we hold the articles of the Catholic Faith is the authority of the infinitely true and truthful mind of God. This should lead us to take a true view of the economy of a visible Church, which is the visible organ of the divine manifestation. Minds do not always transfer their thoughts to other minds without the mediation of organs. Ideas are not impressed at first hand on the listener's mind. Between the expressed and the impressed idea there intervenes a series of signs—visible, audible, tangible. It would be inaccurate thinking to conclude that, because an army obeyed the sound of a trumpet, the motive of its obedience was the trumpet, and not rather the guiding mind whose command was conveyed through this audible sign. If the act of faith may be expressed syllogistically, it will be seen that the teaching of the Church is confined to the minor premiss. Thus:

What God says is true.

But, God says that A is X.

Therefore, it is true that A is X.

It is at once clear that the function of the Church is merely to propose the supernatural

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revelation. The Church is consequently the organ of the revelation, and not the motive why the mind believes the truths revealed.

Having at some length set forth the nature of authority in general and of intellectual authority in particular, we must take a step forward and consider the need of an infallible authority. We shall probably make this the more obvious by plainly stating the doctrine of the Church, which may be summed up in a sentence of the Council of Trent—‘the certitude of Faith . . . admits of no error.’¹ Faith is certitude. It is not opinion, nor likelihood, nor high probability, nor moral certainty. It is absolute assurance. It should not be confounded with knowledge, which is always purely intellectual; whereas certitude is often, in great part, moral. Certitude, and therefore Christian faith, is not merely assent but consent, not merely cognition but recognition, not merely knowledge but acknowledgment. As we shall see later on, even natural faith, and still more Christian faith, include an essential element of volition.

¹ ‘. . . certitudine fidei, cui non potest subesse falsum’
(*Conc. Trid.*, Sess. 6, ch. ix.).

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The certitude of Christian faith is not the certitude of intuition; neither is it the certitude of demonstrative reasoning. The object of faith ever remains unseen and undemonstrated. Faith stands midway between Opinion and what scholastics term *Visio*, and moderns divide into Intuition and Demonstration. Faith agrees with opinion inasmuch as its object (*i.e.* a mystery) is unseen. It agrees with intuition and demonstration inasmuch as it has perfect certitude, though not as we have said perfect knowledge, with regard to that object. Thus faith agrees objectively with opinion, and subjectively with intuition and demonstration.¹

Supernatural faith, then, whereby we are saved, is certitude. Whilst we recognise that this is the fact, we confess that it is not necessarily the fact. The human mind might have been saved by an opinion, had God willed it so. Like the angels, man has been placed, but not necessarily placed, in a state of probation and preparation, wherein he may work out his salvation by what the Vatican Council calls the 'full obedience of our intelligence and will.' But that intellectual and

¹ Cf. Appendix 4.

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moral obedience might have been exacted towards truths which were not absolutely certain and duties which were not always clear. In such a case, of course, God would not and could not have demanded that we should be subjectively certain of what was objectively doubtful, or that we should take as a clear duty what was only a likely command. Still our probation and preparation for full vision and perfect love might have been the night of doubt and hesitation, as we see, in fact, that many souls are prepared for the certainty of faith by longer or shorter periods of conscientious doubt. It is in this way that honest doubt may be the stepping-stone to faith. When, then, we inquire into the need of an infallible authority, we must not be taken to assert that such an authority is an absolute, but only a conditional need; and is even more dependent on the ruling of God's will than on the craving or expectation of man's mind.

This conditional necessity has been expressed by the Vatican Council thus: 'The reason why revelation is to be called absolutely necessary' is, 'because God of His infinite goodness has

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ordained man to a supernatural end.’¹ By the phrase ‘absolutely necessary,’ the Council does not mean an absolute and intrinsic necessity springing either from the nature of man or the nature of faith, but a strict necessity springing from God’s will, and conditional on God’s design of raising man to a supernatural destiny.

We have been arguing that the faith which is demanded of Christians, whatever it might have been had God settled it otherwise, must now be absolute certitude, though not absolute knowledge. We need hardly prove a point which seems so evident from the New Testament, and is yet so strangely overlooked by numbers of devout readers and followers of the New Testament. In the first place the word faith, whether used for intellectual belief or moral trust, is always absolute assurance. This may be exemplified from the four Evangelists. St. Matthew gives a very full description of the dialogue between Our Blessed Lord and the Syro-Phenician woman, who besought ‘the Son of David’ to heal her daughter. Nothing could have exceeded the rebuff she seemed to meet with. The ‘Son of

¹ *Conc. Vat. Const. Dogm. de Fide Catholica*, ch. ii.

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David' compared her to a dog. With ready wit and still readier faith she turned the comparison to her side. Her complete assurance finally overcame, and she went back comforted with the words, 'O woman! great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt.' And her daughter was cured from that hour.¹ In the ninth chapter of his Gospel St. Mark has left us with a striking study of faith. It is one of his most finished pictures. With infinite pains he describes the boy who has a dumb spirit, 'who wheresoever he taketh him dasheth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth.' In reality it is not the misfortune of the son but the faith of the father that is in St. Mark's mind. The dialogue between Our Blessed Lord and the distracted father is of great beauty. It ends with a phrase which will remain till the end of time the most perfect expression of human assurance beset, as it must be beset, by the inherent difficulties of the Infinite: 'I do believe, Lord. Help my unbelief.'² St. Luke gives us a striking picture of the men who were so bent on having their friend cured of the palsy, and so assured that Jesus would work

¹ Matt. xv. 28.

² Mark ix. 23.

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a cure, that they let the sick man down 'through the tiles with his bed.' And when Jesus had seen their determined faith he said, 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.'¹ Nor is St. John in any way behind his fellow Evangelists in describing the assurance of faith. After the mysterious words whereby Our Blessed Lord described the 'bread of life' and scandalised many, St. Peter answered: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.'²

Seeing that in all these cases the faith that is spoken of is full assurance, we are not surprised that the good tidings which the followers of the Master received a mission to make known, were to be received with full consent. The closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel express this thought in the solemn words of our Saviour Himself: 'Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, he shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.'³ There was no dissent amongst the first preachers of the good tidings

¹ Luke v. 20.

² John vi. 70.

³ Mark xvi. 15, 16.

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on this point. St. Mark is not more imperative than St. Paul, whose letter to the 'churches of Galatia' does not present dogma as a matter of opinion, or even of high probability, unless words are no index to convictions. Can there be two opinions about the belief of the writer of such words as these: 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema'?¹ From his prison in Rome he wrote 'to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus, who are at Colossae. . . . And you . . . He hath reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unspotted and blameless before Him; if so ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and immoveable from the hope of the gospel.'² But there had never been a moment's hesitation about the full certitude of faith from the day that the Apostles, after they had been scourged, 'went from the presence of the council rejoicing,'³ till the

¹ Gal. i. 8, 9.

² Col. i. 2, 22-24.

³ Acts v. 41.

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day when St. Peter wrote to the 'strangers dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. . . . You shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations, that the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried by the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honour, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, you love; in whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe, and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.'¹ There can be no question that, in the minds of the first preachers of the good tidings, faith was something so absolute that rather than not keep it they would lose their lives, because if they did not keep it they must lose their souls.

The faith, then, that is expected of Christians is absolute certitude, which men must be prepared to defend with life itself. But if this is the subjective state, the objective state must be of equal assurance. Subjective certitude must rest on objective infallibility. We give more or less trust

¹ 1 Pet. i. 1-9.

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to informants who are more or less trustworthy. If we must give full and absolute trust, our informant must be fully and absolutely trustworthy. As our certitude rests wholly on our 'authority,' only an infallible authority can produce absolute certitude. It is perfectly reasonable to argue that 'if God expects our faith to be absolute certitude, He must guarantee it by infallibility.' We may then go on to take the New Testament merely as one of the numberless historical accounts of the Church. Having found out that in the first ages of the Church faith was taken to be nothing less than absolute assurance, for which alone a man could be expected to part with life, we can go on to conclude that there must be, have been, an infallible voice. It is no part of our present task to argue that such a voice must now exist, or that it must exist not merely in a book, or also in tradition, or that it has a personal or a collective mouthpiece. But if faith is still what it was in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul, we conclude that it must rest on a mind which can neither be deceived nor deceive. Moreover, if the revelation which Christ left in the world is to resemble all other ideas, and to be

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thought out and wrought out by active minds, it would seem an oversight to have left no organ endowed with infallibility to safeguard what it required infallibility to establish. With this thought, and, we may add, this expectation in our minds, we find that light is thrown on such texts as: 'I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you for ever; the Spirit of truth.'¹ 'Simon Bar-Jona, . . . thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'² It would be hard for the expectant mind to rise from the quiet thought of these and such as these texts, without the conviction that somewhere in the world of to-day there is a body of men, under one head, led by a certain well-marked spirit of dogmatic truth—claiming a long historic past—proclaiming its right to rule—exactng submission, and obtaining what it exacts—guaranteeing to bring certitude and peace, and, if we may believe its followers, effecting what it guarantees—sometimes diplomatic and even ambitious, at other times inconsistent and even careless, but rarely suc-

¹ John xiv. 16-17.

² Matt. xvi. 17-18.

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cessful, in matters of worldly polity, yet always inflexible and impregnable in matters of dogmatic principle; tolerant of human nature, yet intolerant of any attack on human conscience; accused of pandering to the senses of its children, yet stimulating its children to lose life itself rather than betray a principle; having a unique insight into the needs of man, and a confessed power of meeting those needs; indulging largely in prophecies of its own continued existence, and existing long enough to justify its prophecies—in a word, everywhere making pretensions to infallible authority, and everywhere showing authority to support those pretensions.

The philosophical examination of the nature of authority, and the semi-apologetic question of the need of an infallible seat of authority, may now be supplemented by a theological exposition of the extent of that infallible authority. It should be borne in mind that no amount of *a priori* reasoning can accurately determine the nature of a divine fact. Not that we are altogether ignorant of some aspects of such a divine fact as infallibility. Thus we may be justified in saying that if God requires subjective certitude

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He will provide objective infallibility. Yet with these obvious concessions we must seek our knowledge of the extent of infallibility from infallibility itself, even as we must rest our judgment of the divinity of Jesus Christ on the account which He Himself gives. As far as the present writer knows, there is no explicit and *de fide* statement of the full extent and limits of ecclesiastical infallibility. The Vatican Council, whilst laying down limits to the infallibility of the Pope, has not laid down all these limits. We are bound to hold that Popes are infallible when they define a doctrine of faith or morals to be held *de fide* by the whole Church; but we are not bound to hold that Popes are infallible *only* under these circumstances. We are told that the Pope is infallible in promulgating dogmas; but we are not thereby told that he is fallible in defining dogmatic facts. Consequently we are without any explicit and authoritative statement as to the full extent and limits of the Church's infallibility.

Nor need this surprise us. Theories about power usually follow upon the exercise of power. We can compare the Church only to an organism

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arrayed with complex functions. It stands to reason that action must precede reflexion. Philosophy follows after life. The Church condemns, approves, tolerates, defines, long before it formulates, a statement or a theory of its powers of condemnation and definition.

But we are coming to hold that in declaring Papal Infallibility to be confined to the spheres of 'faith and morals,' *i.e.* the Credo and the Decalogue, the Vatican Council was implicitly defining the limits of ecclesiastical infallibility which the Pope, even without the assistance of a General Council, was held to possess. It is evident that such a theological boundary at once settles and raises difficulties. Boundaries are proverbially the cause of strife. To draw a line anywhere is always to tempt discussion. Men will argue that there is no good reason why it should not have been drawn a little more on this side or on that; and indeed there may be no better reason to give them than that it must be drawn somewhere. Moreover, wherever drawn, it will be displaced by the fervour or the passions of defendant and foe alike. Perhaps, on the whole, it is best to have a zone of neutral territory which can be looked on

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now as belonging to neither party, and now to one alone, or again to both alike. Somewhat in the same way, the Church may think it best for all practical purposes to withhold any further definition of the limits and extent of her infallibility, content as each difficulty comes up for solution to hear what is said on both sides, and to give her authoritative ruling on the matter.

One last word may be allowed on this difficult matter of settling scientific frontiers of infallibility. We have suggested that although faith is perfect certitude, it is not perfect knowledge. Infallibility in the same way must be considered to produce perfect certainty, but not to safeguard perfect revelation. We are not yet privileged to comprehend either the breadth or the depth of what is revealed. If he who was raised to the third heaven was humble enough to say that the vision of faith was seeing 'through a glass darkly,' we may well hope for a deeper knowledge of what we now hold with full assurance, under the guidance of an authority that cannot be deceived nor deceive in the truths which the Truth itself has handed over to its keeping.

V

THE WILL AND FAITH

BEFORE dealing at close quarters with the actual relations between the faculty of the will and the act of faith it may be well to state, and thereby to do our best to avoid, two common dangers.

It is often stated that the act of faith is the intellectual outcome of accumulated evidence. We have long been accustomed to grant that questions of fact must be proved by what may be called circumstantial evidence. In proving such a fact as that 'Mary I. was daughter of Henry VIII. and Catharine of Aragon,' it is quite evident that every stage of the proof is merely a probability which has strong arguments against it. Yet as events or facts are due to the intersection of general laws, so may irrefutable evidence of facts be due to the intersection of probabilities. There is then a very obvious sense in which probabilities can beget absolute certi-

THE WILL AND FAITH

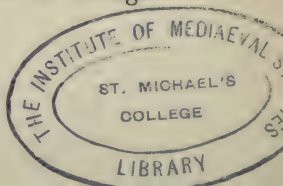
tude. So far so good. But, in matters of faith, this principle needs careful handling. Apologists for the reasonableness of belief are sometimes led to think that their task is over as soon as they have shown that circumstantial evidence can produce certitude. Or, readers of their works may attribute this to them, even when this has been furthest from their mind. To take no less an example than Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. Scattered up and down the work there are not a few passages which might lead the unthinking reader into a false view of Newman's real mind: e.g., Amort 'adopts the argument merely of *greater* probability; I prefer to rely on that of an *accumulation* of probabilities; but we both hold (that is, I hold with him) that from probabilities we may construct legitimate proof sufficient for certitude' (ch. x. § 2). What makes such a proposition the more puzzling to ordinary readers is the fact that Newman is here introducing the subject of religious inferences in the matter of revealed religion. Thus he would seem to suggest that revealed truths may be proved by a cumulation of probabilities, when in reality it is not proof but authority that makes them believed.

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Perhaps it would have made the matter clearer if more stress had been laid on the difference between absolutely and relatively supernatural truth, which, of course, may be taken roughly to be covered by his distinction between revealed and natural religion. But his aim in the *Grammar of Assent* is not merely to distinguish between those truths which are the very object of revelation (such as the divinity of Jesus Christ and the trinity of Divine Persons), and those other truths which, as antecedents of revelation, borrow no small confirmation from the authority which they are designed to strengthen, (such as the existence of a personal God, free-will, the immortality of the soul, the reality of sin). Neither is he greatly concerned to analyse and justify the part played by authority in matters of faith. His one aim is to analyse the ratiocination or complex intellectual act which precedes and occasions the simple act of assent in matters of belief. When, then, readers of the *Grammar of Assent* consider that Newman's sole justification of faith is his appeal to cumulative probabilities they are mistaken in their conclusions, because they have already mistaken his aim.

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We have undertaken this survey of the intellectual danger, not for any very close relationship which it bears to the subject of the Conference, but because it often accompanies another danger much more closely related to the subject of the Will and Faith. For just as some minds are led to think that faith is fully justified as soon as the truths of faith are held to issue from accumulated probabilities, so are there other minds for whom the difficulties of faith vanish as soon as it is held that faith appeals to the emotional side of man. For them the sole justification of faith is Matthew Arnold's epigram that 'religion is morality touched with emotion.' Now faith certainly does appeal to the emotional side of man—to his imagination, his sense of poetry, manliness, loyalty, obedience, reverence, and the like. But no mere emotionalism can be the whole justification of the act of belief. For the moment, however, we may be allowed to forego any fuller analysis of this difficulty and its solution in the hope that in the course of our examination of the part played by the will all inaccuracy of word or thought will be found to have evaporated.



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Three points must be made clear: (1) the nature of the Will; (2) the part played by the Will in the act of attention; (3) the part played by the Will in the act of appreciation.

It may prevent confusion of thought if we set down what we mean by the term Will. In scholastic language we mean the rational appetite: in modern language we should say 'the personal will.' Whether we hold or deny the real distinction between the being and its faculties, and between faculty and faculty, we shall make no mistake in practically holding that, though the human being has faculties, it is not what it has. A man is not his intellect; nor is an intellect a man. An eye is not the sense of sight; nor is the sense of sight an eye. Man is a unity built up of many organically united unities. Moreover, as each faculty or force of the unity has its own object, even as every unit in an attacking army has its own objective, so also is there an object of the whole. Again, as each faculty has its own inclination towards its own object, so has the whole unity an inclination or moving power towards its own object. It follows that as the parts are sub-

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ordinate to the whole, the object, the faculty, the inclination of each part must be subordinated to the moving power or inclination of the whole. There must not merely be a power in each part, but a power in the whole, of guiding and restraining and actuating the parts. In other words, there must be a personal will whose chief function is to restrain each subordinate faculty when this faculty is being exercised, or to actuate a faculty when it is lying dormant to the hurt of the whole organism.

This personal will, which we call the Free Will, may be said to constitute the Personality. Its act is the highest act of personality. By its means the various faculties and functions of a man are gathered up into a synthetic unity, and man, so to say, objectivates his being by being an end to himself. For its peculiar function is to regard things and itself as an end; things as a *finis qui*, itself as a *finis cui*. In the light of an end it judges, measures, restrains, curbs, stimulates, and guides. It allows no force to be exercised merely for itself; but it ennobles every faculty by exercising it for something outside and above itself.

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For the sake of clearness we may now summarise what we mean by an act of faith. It has been seen to be an intellectual assent to truths which human, or at least our human, reason cannot prove. The act of assent to a concrete dogma such as the Trinity may be represented syllogistically, thus:

Whatever $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{God} \\ \text{Jesus Christ} \\ \text{the Church} \end{array} \right\}$ says is true.

But $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{God} \\ \text{Jesus Christ} \\ \text{the Church} \end{array} \right\}$ says there are three Persons in God.

Therefore: there are three Persons in God.

Such a form of argument can nowise be supposed to represent the extremely subtle act whereby the finite mind assents to truths which it may accept though it cannot of itself discover. It may be remarked that the major and the minor premisses differ greatly in their nature. If we deal with the first form of the major, the principle enunciated is found to be one of metaphysics; if with the second form, it is found to include a principle of theology; and if with the

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third form, it is found to include a further principle of exegesis. The few words of the major give but little idea of the immense truth lying behind this simple principle—a principle which embraces almost the whole circuit of pure metaphysical thought. In the minor we quit the region of principle for that of fact. And though there is not a little history involved in the second and third forms of the major, there is very little but history involved in all forms of the minor. It will be seen at once how complex an act is involved in the conclusion. Such a ratiocination as that which we have here outlined has features of difficulty, not merely common to all deductive and inductive reasoning, but peculiar to itself. Though the act of faith is neither deduction nor induction, it is attended by the same obstacles to thought. It shares their difficulty though not their nature. Moreover, it has peculiar difficulties of its own. When reasoning from principle to fact or *vice versa*, the mind sees the fact in the principle or *vice versa*. The conclusion is seen IN the premiss. The evidence for the conclusion is internal to the conclusion. But in arguments from authority

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the mind does not see the conclusion IN the premiss, because, strictly speaking, it cannot be said to see it at all. If we must use a metaphorical expression we can only say that in the act of faith the mind holds the conclusion because of the premisses. The evidence for the conclusion is external to the conclusion. Hence, when deductions and inductions have been rightly made, to look at the conclusion is to see the containing principle or fact; whereas in the act of faith to look at the conclusion is not necessarily to see its accompanying justification.

Having given an analysis of the Will and of the Act of Faith, we must study the part played by the will in attention to the object and process of faith.

Of late years the subject of attention has been given its normal place in psychology. It has even been called 'the essential phenomenon of will'¹; and though this is probably saying too much, it is a step in the right direction. St. Thomas has analysed its function, and has even looked upon it as the source of all subsequent evil in purely intellectual beings that have

¹ *Psychology*, by W. James (London, 1892), p. 448.

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turned to evil. A little thought will show us how great a part the will must play through attention in the intellectual acts of apprehension, judgment, and ratiocination. To go beyond the word to the thing or thought, in apprehension; to link the thing or thought with their accompaniment, in judgment; to keep correlated and yet separate thoughts simultaneously and yet separately before consciousness, in ratiocination—requires an effort of the will which it is not given to every one to have. Indeed it may be said that if there are few thinkers in the world it is not so much for want of intelligence as from want of will. A good part of our modern education consists in keeping before consciousness that which demands no effort of the will. Every lesson is expected to be pleasant. Children are not trained enough to make the sacrifice of keeping before consciousness that which demands effort, and is not in itself pleasurable. Not many reach beyond words to things and thoughts, still fewer can make judgments, and still fewer have the moral force needed to follow the progress through words, things, thoughts, affirmation, denials, premisses, and conclusions

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to consistent theories, or, as we may say, points of view. The numbers dwindle still further when it is a question of long elaborate arguments with allowances made for difficulties, and a balance struck between probabilities.

The justice so tardily meted out to the act of attention is nowhere more fully recognised than in the analysis of error. Psychologists are rediscovering that error is a volitional, even more than an intellectual, product. Falsehood is a condition neither of things nor indeed of thoughts, but of wills. There are no untruths in nature. Nor is ignorance error. It is beside our present scope to inquire what is the influence of deranged faculties over error, seeing that the pathological functions of an organ are not a criterion of its normal functions. But the mere passive reception of impressions however distorted need not be error, though it may lead to error. The mind that feels its way takes evidence for what it is worth, recognises its own limitations, does not overstep its duty, cannot be in error. But the forward will that does not sit at the feet of fact, nor weigh evidence, nor feel its insufficiency, nor restrain its impulsiveness,

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nor practise caution, will be misled by the half-light that envelops all the best things in life and thought. To the disciplined will no ignorance can ever become error. Not to know is often a misfortune; only an uncurbed will can make of it a fault. So that it is true to say that the humble of heart, if they do not see God, see the Truth. Nay, they are in a sense infallible. They cannot be deceived. Infallibility is not omniscience. It is incompatible with error, not with ignorance. And it is rooted in the will more than in any apprehensive or rational faculty.

In the act of faith attention plays an even greater part than in any mere deductive or inductive reasoning; because, as we have said, the conclusions of faith are not seen by internal but by external evidence. The act of deduction or induction is, in a sense, eminently simple. It is seeing one thing in another, as a man sees his face in the glass or life in a living being. But the doctrines of faith are not in this way self-evident or self-conclusive. They bifurcate. I do not mean that the act of faith is essentially complex; though perhaps it is. But if it is

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essentially and finally a simple act with a simple object, the unity of the object depends not on the object known but on the mind knowing. The authority guaranteeing the dogma, and the dogma guaranteed by authority are not necessarily united as fact and principle or principle and fact. If they are brought together into a synthetic unity, the moving force in that unity must be the power of the will acting through attention. Hence if deduction and induction may be compared to seeing an image in a glass, faith may be compared to seeing a double view as one, through the two lenses of a spectroscope; only that in this case the power that blends and unifies the two objects into one is the will. Hence we have not solved the real difficulties of faith when we have appealed to the difficulties that beset any lengthy train of circumstantial evidence. No doubt the major and minor premisses of our syllogism contain matters demanding a steady exercise of the attention required for weighing and judging a convergence of probabilities. Moreover such spiritual truths as are not absolutely supernatural, can only be brought home to the mind by arguments that accumulate

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and converge. But we have all along distinguished such truths as reason can prove from those other essentially supernatural truths that could only be revealed. These latter present features of peculiar difficulty. Nor is this difficulty lessened by the fact that circumstantial and *a priori* evidence may make the premisses certain to our mind. Let us suppose a state of thought which reasons thus:—

I have proved (by metaphysics) that God speaks the truth;

And I have proved (by history) that God teaches there are three Persons in one God;

Therefore I hold that there are three Persons in one God.

A mind in this state cannot be said to have proved the Trinity. It has merely expressed an act of faith in terms of an act of ratiocination, though faith is not an act of ratiocination. In the same way we have seen the danger of expressing an intuition in terms of reflexion. No matter how much proof we bring to bear upon the premisses of an absolutely supernatural truth, the conclusion, *i.e.* the supernatural truth, is always held by virtue of an authority. Now to

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hold a truth by authority is to bring two disparate thoughts into a synthetic unity by the force of the will, through the act of attention. It is here that a disciplined will becomes a necessity. Mysteries of faith are never self-evident. Their light is borrowed from without; nor does it spring from some self-evident principle of thought, or phenomenon of intuition, but from an external authority. It is of the essence of mysteries to be mysterious, that is, to present difficulties, to show blurred outlines, to exist in half-lights, and in such lights to present apparent contradictions. Only a strong effort of the will can enable the mind to shed on such difficulties that light of authority which alone makes them credible, if not visible. Minds untrained to attend, and, consequently, unable to keep their consciousness directed towards disparate or uncongenial thoughts will never reach out to that steady grasp of the supernatural without which faith is an outer profession without inner reality; a mere affair of the lips and tongue, and not an inner service of mind and heart.

But over and beyond the influence of the will in faith through attention to the process and

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conclusion of faith, the will plays perhaps a greater part in, what we may term, appreciation of the premisses and conclusion. Where principles deal with persons, only a personality can thoroughly grasp them. It needs character to distinguish character. Just as a judge of poetry must have an ear attuned to poetry, so must a judge of personality have a distinct personal character.

We have already expressed the act of faith syllogistically. Let us deal with the influence of the will in appreciating the value of the premisses and process. When a man holds that 'everything which *God* says is true,' how much preliminary exercise of the personal will is gathered up in this simple proposition. There must be a clear recognition that the First Cause is a Personal Cause, nay, that He is a Moral Cause; that He not only knows everything that He says, but that He cannot or would not describe anything other than it is. By sheer force of will the believer must keep out of Consciousness all the subtle arguments denying the existence of a personal God, or affirming His personality only to deny His goodness. If he is himself addicted to untruth so as to make light

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of it whenever it serves his purpose, the likelihood is that no external professions of assent to God's truthfulness will ensure his belief that all God's words are true. But the influence of the will through appreciation is still more manifest in the second form of the major premiss, viz.: 'Whatever Jesus Christ says is true.' We are now face to face with a human personality, and we are asked to trust Him, to take His word, to hold Him true. Is this not before all else a work of the will? Nay, even a sign or outcome of affection? Is there not a truth in the saying that before we can believe we must love? To recognise that Jesus Christ is the truth, not only is there needed the negative suppression of all objections, but the positive realisation of His character; both of which mental acts depend almost more on the will than on the intellect. But it is in appreciating the last form of the major premiss that the will has, perhaps, its widest sphere of influence. When we hold that, 'whatever the Church says is true,' it is clear that the will must play a great part in appreciating the worth and truthfulness of such a complex social personality as the Church. It has to deal with the vast question of prejudice,

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that is, with those fore-judgments which are antecedent to any ratiocination, being imposed upon the mind by the force of likes and dislikes, love and hatred, sympathy and repulsion. It is a commonplace that things can be appreciated only by their equals. 'A man should be judged by his peers.' To appreciate the Church's character,—and the 'Ecclesia' of Christ has a character even as Christ Himself,—one must have a certain moral temperament. It is beside the point to urge that this moral character must be a low one, only calculated to drag down human nature. The point we are elaborating at present is that in every act of faith there is needed an act of the will. We are not concerned to inquire whether the act of faith is or is not calculated to ennoble the mind that makes it.

The will has a somewhat less, yet never merely a little, influence, in appreciating the minor

premiss. 'But $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{God} \\ \text{Christ} \\ \text{the Church} \end{array} \right\}$ says that A—— is X——.'

To do justice by this historical fact all the moral equipment needed for the historian must be present. History cannot be one of the

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pure sciences. As it is concerned about the doings of real and social personalities, only a personal will can be expected to supply its data and appreciate its facts. It is notorious how the same facts of history can be differently interpreted by different minds. There are Frenchmen, I believe, who still look upon Waterloo as a moral victory for Napoleon; just as there are Englishmen who remember only Agincourt and Cressy, and forget Joan of Arc.

It would be extremely difficult to analyse the full scope of the will in appreciating, not merely the premisses but the vital process and the conclusion of the act of faith. Behind the simple formula 'Therefore,' how much discipline of the will lies hid! The truths that come to us by way of belief are sovereign. Not merely should they influence the soul; they should rule it. They will not be contented to occupy our lives; they must reign over them. They reach to the innermost parts of the being. They appeal to the personality. They claim dominion over every faculty. To assent to mysteries is not merely to own that they have arguments, or even the best of the argument, on their side; it is to allow

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them to have their sway over our whole being. It has been said that a man's life is his thought: it would be truer to say that a man's faith is his life—not his bodily, but his spiritual life. Faith is not a mere event in a man's life, but a process. It begins with his first *Credo*, and ends only with the *Video* of the Vision of God. All through life faith is penetrating the context of what it believes. The Council of Trent, following St. Thomas, calls faith the 'beginning, foundation, and root'¹ of a man's spiritual life, thereby reminding us that faith is neither a starting-place nor a resting-place, but a source of vital influence which grows with that which it enables to grow. The assent of faith is ever spreading and extending its roots far into every faculty of the soul. This is but to say that the process of deepening our appreciation of the truths of faith is the work of that personal will whose chief work is to regulate and stimulate the activity of every faculty.

We have distinguished the appreciation of the premisses and conclusion of faith from attention to them, in the conviction that the act of observing a fact is but preliminary to the act of setting a

¹ *Conc. Trid.*, Sess. vi. ; *De Justif.*, c. viii.

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value upon it. Fundamentally the two processes may be one. But in their outward expression they are so clearly distinguished as to serve to lend clearness to a subject of no little obscurity. Moreover, the recognition that the personal will plays such a part in attending to and appreciating the whole process of belief in the supernatural will tend to give belief its true place amongst the acts of personality. It is no mere section of a man that is at work in the act of believing. It is the whole knowing, feeling, and willing being, in which the personal will is the moving power. St. Thomas has defined faith as 'an act of the intellect which assents to a divine truth by the influence of the will.'¹ The word he uses to express the influence or motion of the will is *imperium*, which is suggestive of the supreme ruling power in the republic of man's being. Nowhere is the power of the personal will more evident than in the sphere of faith, where it is found to be not merely a preliminary to investigation through attention, but even a factor in the proof through appreciation. In merely

¹ 2^a 2^{ae}, Qu. 2, Art. 9: 'Actus intellectus assentientis veritati divinæ ex imperio voluntatis.'

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abstract truth, such as mathematics or physical science, the only play of the will is through attention. No corruption of will can change our knowledge that two and two make four. But in the truths of faith our personal will enters at every step, limiting and valuing the premisses, accepting, defining, and safeguarding the conclusion. Faith is certitude, but it is certitude in which the personal will holds and turns the scales. Thus faith is a vital action; not a mere mechanical process. It is not ruled by mere mechanical laws of heaviest and greatest, but by the subtler laws of truest and best, which demand from the mind that cleanness of sight which the Master teaches us to look upon as springing from cleanness of heart.

VI
THE DOOR OF FAITH
(CONVERSION)

So much is the subject of Conversion with us in the religious and philosophical world, that we may be pardoned for dealing with it as a psychological and theological phenomenon, and not merely as an episode in the history of personal belief. Of late years psychologists have made praiseworthy efforts to deal with beliefs and changes of belief as empiric facts serving to provide a basis of reality for a new definition and conception of religion. By its undeniable existence and its unmistakable characteristics, the phenomenon of conversion has not suffered itself to be overlooked. Books providing the most ample statistics have appeared; not, indeed, always written with that knowledge of Christian psychology and ethics which would recommend them to the beginner, yet providing valuable data

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for the resolute searcher after the springs of action. By the strict logic of our course of conferences we should be bound to deal merely with conversion as the door through which the mind passes from unbelief to belief. But as conversion deals with even a wider field, and provides even greater food for thought, we shall not apologise for breaking through the rigid barrier of our conferences, to deal with conversion as a psychological and theological phenomenon of great interest.

We take it for granted that there is such a psychological fact as conversion; and that it is not a pathological but a vital function. To support this we may content ourselves with an extract from the *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*.¹ 'On the fact and effect of his conversion' (at the age of sixteen) 'Cardinal Newman's language remains the same throughout his life; from the words just recorded. "On my conversion how the wisdom and goodness of God is discerned!"—written probably in 1816; from those words in the *Apologia*, penned in 1864: "Of the inward conversion of which I speak I am still

¹ Edited by Anne Mozley (London, 1891), vol. i. p. 22.

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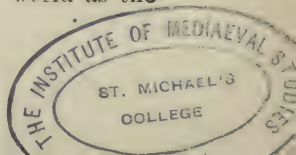
more certain than that I have hands and feet," down to 1885, when Cardinal Newman writes, in answer to the Editor, who had spoken of possible early letters:—"Feb. 28, 1885. Of course I cannot myself be the judge of myself; but speaking with this reserve, I should say that it is difficult to realise or imagine the identity of the boy before and after August 1816. . . . I can look back at the end of seventy years as if on another person." Newman belongs to that group of souls, amongst whom we rank St. Augustine and St. Teresa, who have had the power of observing and witnessing to the subtlest workings of their conscience and consciousness. It is useless arguing against them. They are not dialecticians but discoverers. They do not deal in syllogisms but in experience. If they speak of a conversion they know what they say. If they describe a turning-point in life, a watershed of their thought and action, they must be taken at their word.

Yet, whilst admitting their right to be considered witnesses of the fact, we need not look on them as judges of its value. Being the subjects of the phenomenon, with all its highly charged emotion, they would even seem at first sight to

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be disqualified from passing any unbiassed judgment upon it. To them the fact of conversion would seem to be the dominant fact of life. Indeed it would become to them the door to the only spiritual activity which could be called life; and all the more if this higher life seemed to be reached by the door of a spiritual death and a spiritual resurrection. Now we are nowise maintaining that the spectators of a psychological phenomenon are thereby disqualified to be its judges. On the contrary, it appears to us that no one may so well pass a judgment as they who have had experience. In spiritual matters above all experience is of first necessity. We must 'taste' before we can 'see that the Lord is sweet.' We must venture before we can discover. We must love before we can appreciate what love has in its keeping and gift.

Yet even without their assurance we should be justified in looking on conversion as something beyond the sphere of mental pathology. If the crisis and the subsequent sense of victory which characterise conversion are to be taken for signs of a mind in ill-health, it is clear that most of the moral force that still remains in the world as the



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'salt of the earth' must be either disease or effects of disease. For, to read the lives of the men who have been as great in holiness as other men have been great in knowledge, is to come into contact with the phenomenon of conversion in its most obvious form. Even the most perfect human Life the world has as yet witnessed begins, if not, indeed, with a struggle, at least with a temptation. Into the nature of that 'wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers,' no human mind has ever fully peered. St. Thomas has dared to say that though the Master could be tempted from without He could not be tempted from within. But what in Him was only a formal rejection of evil, and thereby a formal manifestation of holiness, is in other men a true conversion. Not that there are no sinless, innocent lives. Yet no matter with what innocence the earlier years of life are spent, a time comes when evil seems formally presented to the soul; and the soul, smitten for the moment by the fascination of that which lured Lucifer from his throne, must turn away and be converted in order to live. If, then, there are pathological symptoms about the most normal conversions, they are not the whole, nor even the

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chief part, of the phenomenon. The passage from one stage of being to a higher is almost always through a seeming gate of Death. Our birth into this world has many pathological symptoms. Yet it is neither death, nor a gate of death, but the passing from a lower to a higher life.

We may now leave these preliminary remarks to deal more explicitly with the two main divisions of our subject, viz.:—(1) the various kinds of conversion; (2) the characteristics of conversion.

In dealing with the various kinds of conversion it is clear that we must distinguish between what may be called intellectual and moral conversions. As the function of the intellect is not the function of the will, it would seem obvious that a change in the function or object of the intellect does not mean a corresponding change in the function or object of the will. As truth is the object of the intellect, and goodness or duty the object of the will, and an object may be recognised as a truth before it is recognised as a duty, an intellectual conversion may take place before or independently of a moral conversion. Indeed it is a truism that some souls are intellectually convinced of the truth of the faith long before they have faith in

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the truth. We must not be taken to hold that any intellectual growth, or even any intellectual change, is an intellectual conversion. The conversion we are speaking of regards a change; and a change not merely in purely speculative matters, such as mathematics or science, but in those broad, philosophical, and still more theological, matters that lie at the base of practical life. It is not easy to say what this conversion is. At times it is nothing more than the explicit acceptance of truths which have long since been acted upon; or it is the formal renunciation of principles which have been gradually proving their hostility to other principles, of earlier, equal, or later date; or it is full acceptance of truth after years of partial acceptance and partial rejection of what was untrue; or it is the sudden recognition that what we have always held has been true, though we now see that we held it on false grounds; or it is the clear vision that whilst our principles have been right, our conclusions have been wrong; or it is the finding of a rational justification for instincts which only our outward conduct has contradicted; or, lastly, it is the sudden capture of a new point of view which wins sovereign

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rights over our mind by the law and unity it establishes throughout the length and breadth of our thought. This last form of intellectual conversion is the highest and best. All others are but faint copies of it. In its complete form it is the recognition of the Infinite as such. Before such a mental change takes place in a soul its being is but a divided self. The faculties, powers, forces, desires, activities, ideals of the mind are a disorderly, or at least disorganised, mob. Or they may be yielding a fealty of fear to some upstart and tyrant untruth. Quietly, and at times almost unconsciously, the divided self, wearied of its inner strife, determines that the master untruth must be got rid of, and truth, which is the Infinite, set up in its place. How or when this may be done it hardly knows. Then when things, perhaps, are going on as usual, a moment arrives with a happy blend of circumstances. It flashes upon the soul that the time for a master-stroke has come. And before the day is over, Truth, the Infinite, has set up its kingdom within the frontiers of the mind. A great convert of the past century has analysed this turn of the tide with a vividness seldom equalled. 'One day

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at the corner of a street, in some lonely way, we stop, we listen; and a voice whispers to us in the centre of our soul, "See! There is JESUS CHRIST!" It is a divine moment; when the soul after gazing on a thousand things with their passing beauty, comes upon that one Beauty which can never deceive. Those who have never felt it may treat it as a dream; but those who have once seen what I speak of can never forget it more. . . . It is, indeed, a sublime moment; when the last ray of light pierces the soul and links to a common centre truths which till then lay scattered and apart. . . . An unbeliever one day, a Christian the next—certain with an invincible certainty—it was not the denial of my reason suddenly reduced to a state of uncomprehensible slavery. It was rather the expansion of reason; a view of all things within a broader horizon and under a brighter light. Neither was it any sudden abasement of the will under some stern and icy rule; but the development of all its energies through an act which came from a higher source than that of nature. Lastly, it was not the death of the affections, but their fulfilment and ennobling. The whole man was left

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untouched; only there was added to him the God that made him.' A still more illustrious convert of the fourth century has left us in his *Confessions* a picture that will remain through all time as the description of souls passing from darkness to light. 'But when Thou didst soothe the brow of him who saw not, and didst close my eyes lest they should see vanity, I withdrew a little out of myself, and my madness slept.

'Then, I awoke in Thee. And Thee, the Infinite, I saw in a new way. And this sight came not from the flesh.'¹

Thus, intellectual conversion is an upheaval of mind which results from recognising the Infinite as an idea. At such a moment the field of life broadens; and we get the Infinite for our horizon.²

Moral conversion must be clearly distinguished from the mere mental change which we have just sought to analyse.

If intellectual conversion is dominantly the finding of a new and far-reaching point of view which simplifies the scattered thoughts and theories of the mind, moral conversion may be looked upon as the realisation in will of what

¹ *Conf.*, Bk. vii. c. 14.

² Cf. Appendix 6.

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has been recognised in thought. Sometimes it is nothing more than the cutting ourselves adrift from some childish bauble that held the soul down when it should have soared to greater heights; or it is the realisation, that in spite of the ease with which we ran our years of youth, life is not a matter of ease, but of effort; or it is victory obtained over some one definite failing that threatened to tyrannise over the soul; or it is the deep-seated conviction that in spite of what appears on the outside, we are sinners inwardly, maimed at birth and self-wounded by our own folly; or it is the determination to use the fleeting things of earth so as to reach the lasting things of heaven; or it is the strong, fervent act which breaks down all the dykes and entrenchments of our cowardice, and turns our half-hearted 'I would' into a resolute 'I will'; or lastly it is the recognition by a whole-hearted act of our free will that God's will must be the motive and the motive-power of all we do. We have said the intellectual conversion is the recognition of the Infinite as an idea; moral conversion may be defined as the recognition of the Infinite as a reality.¹

¹ Cf. Appendix 7.

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We must complete our divisions of Conversion by calling attention to the common phenomenon of first and second conversion. Perhaps the earliest explicit mention of this division is in the following extract from the *Life of Mother Pelletier*, the foundress of the Nuns of the Good Shepherd.¹

‘In the case of the generality of penitents a double conversion takes place. The *first* is more or less a matter of feeling. It is produced by the emotions that bring the wanderer to the convent by the kindness and charity of the religious, by the good example set by her companions, by the order and quiet and harmony standing out in salient contrast to the horrors of her past existence. But this state of things seldom lasts long. A revulsion of feeling takes place. The remembrance of past pleasures and enjoyments, the thirst for liberty, the impatience of restraint all assail the penitent, who is apt to sink into a state of depression and indifference. . . . The two greatest temptations of penitents are against faith and hope.’

This phenomenon is constantly witnessed in the lives of the saints. St. Francis of Assisi may

¹ By A. M. Clarke (London, 1895), p. 68.

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be looked upon as an example. St. Augustine in his *Confessions* mentions his first conversion and fall, to be followed later on by his final conversion. We may even see the traces of the same phenomenon in the lives of the Apostles who fell away at least for a day after their call, and then came back never to fall again. This phenomenon may be found both in moral and intellectual conversions. Experience of souls will teach any one how common it is to find that men waver after having come to the truth, and then finally lay hold of it without further change. Newman teaches, and perhaps rightly teaches, that certitude is in itself indefectible. When once it has been arrived at, it can never fade out of the mind. He does not mean to say that under the stress of arguments all bearing one way, and unaccompanied by any formal reply, the mind may not be drawn over for a moment to the other side. Nor does he intend to deny that men may often think themselves certain when they are really ahead of their proofs and are giving too much to the emotional side of their soul. Nor does he deny that there may be lapses of memory in matters of fact. But

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granted that, in spite of these limitations, certitude is something lasting, it nowise stands in the way of this phenomenon of a second intellectual conversion. For as we have said in the process of summing up the complicated, or at least complex argument preceding intellectual conversion, an impatient mind may leap over certain steps and lay hold of the conclusion without due care. Sooner or later, however, this impatience and precipitancy of thought will revenge itself upon the thinker. Generally speaking, the steps of proof which ought to have been examined will come to mind later on, with added force, when the soul judges itself at rest in the truth. Had these steps been taken notice of when the mind was making its way towards the truth, they would have been recognised as negligible quantities in a problem, or by-products of a process, or shadows of a reality. Now when the process of thinking has come to rest in the possession of truth, they start up with all the force of an insurrection. They seem to directly contradict the truth. If they find the mind overcome by a reaction of weariness following upon a surfeit of intellectual certitude, they easily impress its now sensitive

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palate with a distorted and magnified idea of their importance. Not merely do they disquiet the mind; they upset it. Only when the process is gone over from the beginning, and they are given their proper place, are they seen to be no more than difficulties; such as beset all, and especially the higher truths. In analysing types of first and second conversion, perhaps it might be true to say that in the first conversion the mind has been struck by the untruth of what it has hitherto held, rather than by the truth of what it is about to hold. When it has seen and therefore seen through the half truths on which it has hitherto lived, the disgust it feels will sometimes drive it over to the truth. This of course is not a wrong or an illogical way of acting. Yet truth can and should be accepted for its own sake, and not merely as a city of refuge from untruths. If a mind turns to the truth merely in self-defence, the likelihood is that when the old errors have passed into the state of remembrance and have thereby lost much of their repulsiveness, truth for its own sake and in spite of its intrinsic difficulty will become increasingly difficult. Unless the mind can come to accept truth because it is true,

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it will never reach its second conversion. Again, truth has many sides. Even when it is not good it is beautiful, and appeals if not to our moral, at least to our æsthetic feelings. Indeed beauty has been defined as 'the smile of truth.' Assuredly in the search for truth a sense of beauty is an advantage. Some minds seem to track truth, if one might say so, by the scent of its beauty; and assuredly the highest beauty is the highest truth. Yet there are so many kinds of material, spiritual, intellectual and moral beauty, that an æsthetic sense has the limitations of all finite powers. A mind may quite unreasonably run ahead of reason. In such a case it is not unlikely that reason will revenge its defeat by a destructive criticism of what it could be so easily directed to support. Minds with a fine sense of beauty must be taught that although beauty is the smile and radiance of truth, truth must be sought for itself and not for its smile or radiance. Until truth is thus sought for what it is and not for what it bears or brings, the mind of him who possesses it may still stand in need of a second and final conversion.

The phenomenon of second moral conversion has many analogies with its intellectual counter-

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part. Mother Pelletier has given the key-note of it in laying it down that, speaking generally, the first moral conversion is often a matter of feelings, just as the first intellectual conversion is sometimes merely a matter of precipitous instinct. In the progress of the will from evil to good two distinct movements may be noted; the turning aside from evil, and the turning towards good. Logically they are not the same; and psychologically a will may unfasten itself from the creature without thereby clinging to the Creator. Even as it is unsatisfactory to turn to the truth merely as a last resource when all else has failed, so is it not the highest volitional act to turn towards good merely because evil promises to play us an ill-turn in the long-run. Not that such a motive for goodness is irrational or wrong. But it is provisional and incomplete. In most cases it must pass into a higher, if it would not sink into a lower plane. And when the passing into an explicit turning towards good takes place the soul experiences its second moral conversion.

Or this conversion may happen in another way. We have said that truth appeals to some souls by

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its beauty rather than its truth. So too, goodness may appeal to souls by its beauty rather than by its goodness and truth. They may be won over, as perhaps the majority are won over, by an appeal to their feelings rather than to their mind. It is the emotional rather than the rational side of their soul that is most engaged in the event. Or they may turn to good, as we have said that minds accept the truth, for the sake of its accompaniments or results, more than for its own sake. Yet as truth and goodness are things absolute they should not be referred on to other things or accepted as means to an end. They are ends in themselves; indeed, they are *the* ends in themselves. Far from being means to an end, all else must be directed towards them. But when souls turn over a new leaf of life under the influence of friendship, or out of respect for a superior, or at a word of counsel, or under the shock of some great sorrow, or whilst suffering from fear, or whilst flooded by a great joy, or disturbed by undue excitement, or because Jesus Christ strikes the imagination, or because the Church has developed the arts, or because Christianity has encouraged scholarship, or

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because goodness is happiness, there is still need for a second moral conversion when goodness is sought and exercised because it is good, and God is loved and served because He is God.

We may now pass on to the characteristics of the various kinds of conversion.

There is the *sudden* and the *slow* type. Perhaps on the whole, moral conversion is more commonly sudden; and intellectual conversion more commonly slow. It is a characteristic of acts of the will that a higher volitional level is never reached without what scholastic psychologists have named a 'fervent' act. It is their teaching that habits, or in other words, higher levels of volitional activity, are the outcome of a free will which acts up to its full power of acting. Now it is quite evident men cannot always be at their best or highest. It is only from time to time and under certain circumstances that they can put forth their utmost. Analogy with every organic motive power seems to establish this as a general law of nature. There is then nothing irrational in the will suddenly leaping up to gain a footing which it hardly hoped to gain. And it is significant

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that almost all the types of conversion found in the Gospels are of this sort.

Intellectual conversions are usually slower. The fact that intellectual activity is a kind of sight prepares us to expect that it can be as continuous and gradual as the exercise of seeing. Perhaps no other organ can bear such an amount of activity as the eye. The ear, the palate, the organs of smell and touch soon tire of their object, or altogether fail to perceive it. The eye can bear prolonged vision, and of its very nature can only recognise the whole of a large object by a gradual acquaintance with each part. Sounds, scents, tastes, and touches are complete in a moment. They need no repetition. Each is simple in itself. Visible objects, if they are large, take some time to be known. In the same way, the intellectual knowledge needed for a change of view can rarely be sudden. Loyalty to what it has accepted makes it slow to act. The force of any conviction acts like a prejudice. A point of view when acted upon for years seems like an intuition. Then again, the fact of having to discredit what we formerly held as true, leads us

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to discredit our intellectual faculties for holding it true. Again, the best things in knowledge, and still more in faith, when susceptible of proof, are susceptible only of that circumstantial and moral proof which of its nature needs time to be thought over. All this makes it hard for the reason to act suddenly, though of course there are times when, towards the end of a long process of investigation which has seemed fruitless, the truth suddenly flashes upon the mind, just as the sun rises in a hill country by suddenly darting its ray above a mountain peak.

Sometimes these two types of intellectual and moral conversion run together, as in the case of St. Augustine; sometimes a longer or shorter interval separates them, as in the case of Newman. Usually when a definite conversion both of mind and heart is needed, the moral conversion takes place first. Light finally comes as the result of self-sacrifice. The pure of heart see God. In such cases the moral conversion sometimes quickens and sometimes delays the intellectual conversion.¹ The conscience may

¹ Cf. Appendix 8.



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be led to take upon itself the duty of loyalty towards the intellectual principles which have been compatible with its conversion. It cannot help being grateful towards those truths which seem to have led it where it is. Thus it often happens that it is the good rather than the ill-living who are hardest to convert to the truth. In the days of Our Blessed Lord it was the upright Scribes and Pharisees who remained untouched by exhortations which won endless sinners. This same truth is put paradoxically in the Apocalypse: 'Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. But . . . thou art lukewarm. . . . Because thou sayest, I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked' (Apoc. iii. 15-17). In the case of the upright Nicodemus, it needed three years to win his heart; in the case of the scholarly Gamaliel, we know not if his heart was ever won; whereas the Samaritan and the Magdalen were won at first sight. To read the letters of Newman during the seven years in which he struggled between loyalty to his past and to his future is a

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revelation of the difficulties that can be raised up against what is true by the over-sensitive fear of sinning against truth.¹

Sometimes, on the other hand, a delicate conscience has a short way towards the truth. It lays a firm hand on all mere objections. Its loyalty is pressed into the service of what it should hold, rather than of what it has held. Delay seems to it a fault; denial a crime. In the fervour of its faith it has no obligations but towards the truth. Its heart burns within it; nor can it stay quietly in its bark upon the waters, once it has caught sight of truth awaiting it on the shore.²

When moral and intellectual conversion are being wrought out together, and in a great soul, the dramatic side of the phenomenon reaches the height of the sublime. This is the reason why the *Confessions* of St. Augustine will ever remain a classic of the highest rank—not merely the first but the noblest autobiography of one who was at once a man, an unbeliever, and a sinner.

Another characteristic of conversions is that in some cases the preliminary mental or moral

¹ Cf. Appendix 9.

² Cf. Appendix 10.

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process is explicit; in others implicit. We might almost have said that some conversions are of the conscious, some of the sub-conscious, type. Some minds are naturally keen observers of what is outside them; some of what is within. Some are more cognisant of processes; some of objects. Nor is it in moral conversions alone that there is a large exercise of what we may call sub-conscious activity. Even in intellectual changes the mind takes steps for reasons that it cannot altogether co-ordinate. Hence the unsatisfactoriness of that common form of literature, the many *Apologias pro vita sua*. The ordinary mind has just power enough to act reasonably, but not power enough to give the reasons on which it acts. A man's account of his conversion is often little less than a caricature of the process which ends with a freshly acquired intellectual or moral plane. To listen to what they have to say of their change is to feel that they have obtained the truth on false pretences. Were the reasons they give the reasons they ought to give, it would be evident that their arguments merely smuggled them into belief. But the truth is that conversion, whether

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of mind or heart, is a process of too subtle, spiritual, and personal a nature to be satisfactorily described by the x , y , and z of our syllogistic reasonings.

By its nature the will is much more hidden in its operation than the intellect. Hence the difficulty in describing the steps that have led up to a change of heart. It is chiefly in the region of sub-consciousness, or to use a modern phrase, in the subliminal self, that changes of heart are wrought; whereas by its very nature the intellect lies open to consciousness. Yet even when the mind has explicit knowledge of what it looks upon as the steps of its conversion, it is merely an observer of some by-process necessary for the removal of difficulties, but not directly necessary for the forward step which it was intended to further. In mere physiological matters, it is not life but any interruption of life that provides matter for consciousness. The elaborate arguments often given by men who have made a great intellectual change are chiefly calculated to remove difficulties. Hence as no two minds have the same difficulties, no two accounts of conversion run in the same lines.

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When the preliminary process of conversion is dominantly sub-conscious, the subsequent act of conversion is usually sudden. To quote the words of Professor James, 'His possession of a developed subliminal self and of a leaky or per-vious margin is thus a *conditio sine qua non* of the subjects becoming converted in the instantaneous way.'¹ And then he goes on to touch a point which Catholic readers of these Conferences may accuse us of having overlooked. To them it may seem that we have all along looked on conversion as a work of unassisted nature, whereas we have merely sought to give the analysis of that part—and it always a large part—which nature plays. If we are asked whether nature accounts for all kinds of conversion, and especially for that change which ends with the acceptance of a higher standing in thought and living, we would reply in the words of Professor James: 'But if you, being an orthodox Christian, ask me as a psychologist whether the reference of a phenomenon to a subliminal self does not exclude the notion of a direct presence of the Deity altogether, I have

¹ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 242.

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to say frankly that as a psychologist I do not see why it necessarily should. The lower manifestations of the subliminal, indeed, fall within the resources of the personal subject; his ordinary sense-material, inattentively taken in and sub-consciously remembered and combined, will account for all his automatisms. But just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so is it logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a sub-conscious region which alone should yield access to them.¹

On the whole this statement contains a valuable psychological principle, which in the hands of a Catholic preacher need merely be completed. What the professor looks upon as a possibility, the preacher looks upon as a reality. The natural account of the phenomenon of conversion does not exclude a supernatural account. Secondary Causes are not subversive of the First Cause, but supplementary to it as organs of its primal efficiency. Nor when we have traced the

¹ *Ut supra.*

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psychological laws of mental and moral conversion must we be taken to deny that there is a theological account of the same matter; and that God is in and throughout the whole process which ends with the recognition of His truth and will.

VII

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It is not the aim of this Conference to deal with that extreme form of doubting which denies the existence or the rationality of all certitude except the certitude that everything is involved in doubt. It is consoling to reassure ourselves, on the word of psychologists, that such extreme scepticism could never be a lasting intellectual state. Whether or not such thorough-going sceptics are to be found outside our philosophical text-books, they would assuredly be found to be far beyond the reach of any logical process either of persuasion or refutation. Their inconsequence, as it saves them from the ill-effects of any application of their principle to daily life, would also protect them from anything that could be urged in favour of a reconsideration or rejection of their principle.

Nor shall we come to closer quarters with those

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other minds who embrace a partial scepticism in this or that department of religious thought. There are not a few who link their acceptance of revealed religion and even of Christianity with a denial of one or other point of dogma. Whilst accepting the infallibility of the Bible they scruple to admit the infallibility of the Church. They admit the change of water into wine at Cana of Galilee, but deny Transubstantiation. They see no difficulty in admitting that Baptism cleanses from original sin, but cannot see that any sacrament could remit mortal sin. They admit the Sacrament of Penance, which forgives the guilt of sin, and reject Indulgences, which merely profess to deal, not with guilt, but with punishment. They admit the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, and reject the Real Presence. To such as these we shall make no formal appeal; though some of the principles which will come up for explanation will doubtless meet their psychological state.

The thoughts which will be raised in this Conference will be mainly meant for that large number of sincere thinkers who scruple to accept the supernatural. These men conceive it highly immoral to consent to the truths that lie at the

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root or on the summit of Christian Revelation. They refuse to stir outside the region of facts into what they would term a penumbra of theory. To assent to the immortality of the soul, or to the existence of a personal God, or to the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, or to the Real Presence, would seem to them a reckless submergence of the powers which nature has given them for the pursuit of truth. It is enough for them to find their minds brought into touch with what are generally called facts. They find their happiness sufficiently provided for in the positive sciences which, long looked upon as worked out, have yielded such treasure during the past century. In their more emotional moods they are prompted to ask why men should fret themselves to detect and analyse the dim shadows of their fancy, when the full and living realities of the world in all their uncounted richness are all around. 'Why,' they exclaim, 'should a man distress himself with such wraith-lore as immortality and incarnation and infallibility, when he may walk abroad and rejoice in the great mathematical, physical, and biological sciences

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which have proved such inexhaustible mines of knowledge?' Nay, more, they will boldly hold, and no less boldly teach, that to go beyond our data, to put more into our conclusions than we find in our premisses, to begin with physical phenomena and end with metaphysical entities, to lay a foundation of material beings and to build up an edifice or hierarchy of spiritual substances, to start from a standpoint of likelihood or probability and to arrive at the absolute certitude of faith, is a process equally opposed to the normal action of the understanding and the moral action of the will. Nor, as they will add, ought a man to be tempted to the folly of belief by the acknowledged restfulness of believing. Only when peace, not duty, has become the aim of life, may a man supplement the facts which he knows by the theories he would believe. Those who will not be ensnared into chaunting the *Credo* by any promise of 'Peace to men,' are asked to share the blessed lot of such as cannot sin against the truth, by calling the darkness of human knowledge the broad day of divine certainty. And though their devotion to truth cuts them off from a very world of thought, to them

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it is a world of dreams which any man can enter if he choose; but which no one would choose to enter who prefers to rest his life on facts however few to fancies however inviting.

It is to explain and relieve, if possible, the state of soul represented by these words, that we would write. To others we will leave the task of meeting argument by argument, and of counteracting negation by affirmation. For ourselves our aim will be to analyse this state of mind by comparing it with an emotional state well known to Catholic directors by the name of 'Scruples.' Then, having considered doubt in its nature, it will be natural to examine into its causes. Lastly, some principles may be laid down for its cure.

Scruples are a disease of the conscience. Just as there are lax consciences which override almost every regulation of law, so are there timorous, scrupulous consciences which press law till it becomes unbearable. Strictly speaking, if conscience is a dictate of right reason, scrupulousness is but the distorted shadow of conscience.

Though it is not always easy at first sight to say what is a scrupulous and what a sensitive conscience, a little experience, aided by the prin-

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ciples of ascetic theology, will in the end make the matter certain. Of course, experience is worth more than theory, because no general theoretical diagnosis will meet individual cases. One of the most common symptoms of a scrupulous conscience is an impossibility of making use of reflex principles. The moral theologian knows that the judicious use of these principles is the very life of a true healthy spirituality. Such moral principles as 'Where there is doubt there is liberty,' or 'Positive law does not bind us under grave inconvenience,' or 'Possession is nine points of the law,' or 'There is no sinning through ignorance, save when ignorance is a sin,' serve to raise the dead letter of ethics into a living guide of conscience. Even the extremely delicate virtue of *ἐπιείκεια*, whereby the letter of law must be sacrificed to the spirit, has an important function in practical matters. But it is just in these matters that the timid soul will take fright. Every application of a reflex principle that enlarges liberty or lessens obligation appears an act of disloyalty to conscience. It is not that the mind is unable to agree that reflex principles have a legitimate place in questions

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of conduct. Such souls often possess a rare hold of abstract ethics, if they happen to be professors of moral theology. They have often the power of discussion, but not of use. They will agree that reflex principles are loyal, pertinent, necessary. They will even consent that in the case in point such principles could lawfully be employed. But they will not employ them. Sometimes gifted with a strong power of drawing up an ethical argument, they stop short of drawing a practical conclusion. In extreme cases they will conclude, 'This should be done'; but they will leave it undone. In scholastic language they may have a firm will to reach the end (*voluntas*), and an equally firm will to take the means (*intentio*), but through some moral paralysis they cannot actually will to act (*imperium*).

The same want of determination is found not merely in this sphere of volition, but in the intellectual sphere. It is not uncommon to find minds that are competent, and even highly competent, in drawing up arguments which they have no power of completing by their necessary conclusions. Through some fault of mind they cannot keep purely intellectual concepts in focus.

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As all ratiocination is the recognition of the fact as standing under the law, and of the phenomenon as related to the substance, they seem incapable of keeping these two concepts upon a plane that would enable them to make the necessary comparison and draw the necessary conclusion. When engaged in examining the fact, the principle or law fades into a mere useless reminiscence; when the principle or law is presented to consciousness, the fact becomes a mere uneventful incident. Thus there are many minds who would be surprised and even offended if their hold on the great principle of Causality was doubted. They will maintain, and even make a good show of proving, the omnipresence of this great Causal Law. Though to them the whole universe is a unity because of this law, they take fright as soon as it is suggested that there is a First Cause. To their minds such an uncaused being would be the denial of their first principle, when in reality He would only be the justification of it. Nor can they reject Him merely on these grounds unless they equally reject the Law itself, which is confessedly an uncaused concept, if not indeed an uncaused reality. In the same way,

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much of the difficulty created by the subject of evil is due to an inability to draw conclusions after drawing up premisses. To many minds the existence of evil remains an irrefutable argument against the existence of God, seeing that God is not God if He is not good. Now the doctrine of the existence of a personal First Cause who has a character is not merely the rationalisation of the problem of evil, but the destruction of it. Whether there is a God or not, evil exists; and its existence must remain a difficulty in all attempts to bring all things and events under the Law of Causality. To assert that God exists is but to assert that evil does come under the Law of Causality, and that it is only permitted by a good God to serve a good purpose. Instead of the existence of God throwing the existence of evil into a more painful shadow, it serves to rob it of much of its darkness by showing that evil itself falls under law and turns to good by the will and wisdom of the First Good. That there are minds—honest yet scrupulous minds—who find it impossible to reconcile Supreme Goodness with evil is due to their powerlessness to allow arguments to develop their rightful

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conclusions, in spite of the difficulties which beset all truths, especially the highest.

A second characteristic of scrupulous souls is their inability to piece together circumstantial arguments. It is sometimes thought that circumstantial, or what has been called convergent, evidence is not such as can justify certitude; but this is a false opinion. In truth, the only means of proving facts is convergent evidence. This must not be taken as a denial that such a fact as 'This person whom I see is Caius' is not an object of intuition. Assuredly it is an object of intuition; but if we begin to examine the evidence for it, we shall see that it is circumstantial and convergent in nature. Thus, if we say that we know that the person nearing us is Caius because of his height, this should prove nothing, seeing that there are probably millions of this height. Take his size, voice, hair, eyes, features, walk, manner—there are probably millions that share with him these qualities. Taken individually, then, these qualities prove nothing, and would identify no one. Taken together, joined in one individual, they denote Caius, and no one else. They are the stroke of

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the brush, the light and shadow, the line and curve, the form and colour, needed to make Caius something more than the *individuum vagum*, or 'rational animal,' of anthropology.

In matters of duty there are many who have not the power of putting matters together, or of summing up. They can see one thing and see it clearly. But their minds refuse to take a general view which includes all the circumstances. If they take what they call a general view, it is by leaving out most of the circumstances which particularise the object. Only the specific, not the individual, qualities are retained in consciousness and conscience. Such consciences are unable to formulate the law or the exception to the law which applies to the case. Thus, for example, there are some who through a scruple would leave a relation in grave sickness in order to go to Mass on Sunday. It is true that the letter of the law obliges each one to hear Mass. But the law of Sunday Mass is now in conflict with the law of charity. Moreover, the full circumstances are, that there is some one in a dangerous state, with no one to see to them, and that Sunday Mass is a positive obligation, and so on. The timid

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conscience cannot sum up all the circumstances, individualising the case in point and removing it, not indeed beyond the jurisdiction of law, but beyond the jurisdiction of the law of Sunday Mass, and placing it under the law of charity. Were we asked whether such scrupulosity of conscience is common, we should be inclined to answer that in our experience it is less common than the scrupulous impossibility of drawing a conclusion ; and, certainly, less common in matters of conscience than in matters of thought.

Indeed, it is in matters of thought that this particular kind of scrupulosity has widest rule. Far from being easy to observe the particular, it is very difficult. If experience teaches us anything, it is how rare it is to find a full and accurate description of even the simplest experience. No two descriptions of the same phenomenon, no two statements of the same event, ever agree. It may be said that men may not agree in describing this or that accident of the substance, even when they do agree with regard to the substance. But it must be borne in mind that what is accidental to the species is, so to say, essential to the individual. As the scholastics

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would say, 'Haec ossa et hoc corpus' do not belong to the species. But they constitute Caius, Sempronius, and the individual man. Without them, all ideas are but a logarithm of the reality, It is being increasingly felt, and idealists are causing it to be remembered, that the so-called physical sciences do not deal with concrete things, but with abstractions. Acoustics, heat, electricity, mechanics, dynamics, biology, and all other positive sciences do not deal with the individual as such, but with such abstractions as sound, heat, electricity, local motion, material energy, and life. None of these are confessedly occupied with the concrete, but with the abstract. There is still needed a science of the individual, just as in a workshop, with its frame-benders, plate-layers, riveters, caulkers, enamellers, brass-workers, blacksmiths, there are the fitters who take the various disjointed materials and piece them into a unity. Now it is quite conceivable that one man might unite in himself the craft of all those we have enumerated, and yet have no turn for fitting together; and we can conceive a workman with a genius for fitting, who could make no headway with brass-finishing or riveting. In the

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same way, we may see how a man may possess a general knowledge of all the abstractions embraced under mathematics, logic, physical science, and biology, and yet have no head for unifying and therefore individualising these sciences into a further science. This is but to assert the difference between mere knowledge in general, or general knowledge and philosophy. Were we to exemplify this, we should say that although Butler had no very general knowledge, he was a philosopher; and Herbert Spencer was not a philosopher, though he had an extraordinarily general knowledge.

All this will lead us to recognise that there are numbers of minds so constituted that they cannot take a general view of things without burying themselves in abstractions, and losing hold of the individual phenomenon or event. We may exemplify them by such an event as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They may make the sincerest professions of want of prejudice, which merely means that they will conscientiously weigh out some measure of toleration to their opponents' arguments, but none to their opponents' conclusion. Then they will proceed to reckon



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up the phenomenon: an empty tomb—a few soldiers, the basest of men, and the most superstitious—dazed by an earthquake—drowsy after a long night watch; a group of enthusiasts—hypnotised by a mystic prophecy—stunned by their own flagrant denial—goaded by repentance—discouraged by their leader's death—longing to find their leader not dead but living; and the case is judged. They have not summed up the phenomenon. That they could not do; that, indeed, no one could do. But they have made abstraction from the various circumstances that could mark the phenomenon itself with its stamp of individuality. They make no mention, or lay no stress on the character of Jesus: His sublime doctrine—His clear prophecy—the character of the disciples—of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas, and the others—of the appearances to men—to fishermen, *i.e.* to men who are not easily frightened—in broad daylight—on the shore—in a closed room; to men who doubted, to men who had everything to lose by believing; to a few, to many, now here, now there; to men who laid down their lives for the truth of this event; to men whose preaching of this event has been the

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resurrection of a fallen world. These and other accidental circumstances give the event its unique character, marking it off from all else; and are at once its individuality and its defence. But it is not easy for all minds, and it is perhaps especially hard for merely logical minds, to take this broad, philosophic, and therefore individual and accurate view of the event. They will view it as an episode in cosmic evolution, or as an incident in ethics, or as an event in history, or as related to the Law of Causality, or as a phenomenon of anthropology, or as the outcome of a tribal longing, or as matter for psychical investigation, or as evidence of hallucination, or as extremely interesting to students of mysticism. That is, they will take up an abstract standpoint; they will try to weigh the most momentous event in the world by the baby balance of some one science. And they will scruple to accredit it with any supernatural import merely because their balance, true to its limitations, reports this phenomenon to be substantially the same as every other phenomenon which it has the power to weigh. Minds that find in such a judgment the duty of not moving forward to the whole of the

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phenomenon may well be said to be suffering from an intellectual scruple.

We have been hitherto engaged in making a parallel between the scruple of duty and the scruple of doubt—*i.e.* between moral and intellectual scruples. We may close this first part of our Conference by remarking that women by their temperament are more prone to moral scruples, and men to intellectual scruples. This is the general psychological law, which has its necessary exceptions. When these exceptions take place they are generally remarkable. Women, as a rule, are not sceptics; nor are men devotees. But if there is a sadder sight than a man given over to scruples, it is that of a woman who has thrown over belief.

Moreover, a common trait of the morally and intellectually scrupulous is their power of argument, which we have agreed not to accept as evidence of any great power of reasoning, or at least of thought. Wise directors of souls know how many subtle and seemingly irrefutable arguments scrupulous consciences can bring up to prove their point. They will dispute a point of law or fact with all the subtlety of a dialectician.

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Yet all the while their one defect is a want of common-sense to enable them to see things and events exactly as they are, and not as they present themselves to their scrupulous conscience. But this subtle power of argument and this strange paralysis of the will-power or of the reason are by no means allowed to dominate their heart and mind. Souls are rarely found to be scrupulous in every department of duty or thought. They contrive to make occult compensation for over-strictness in one point by over-laxity in another. Souls that are scrupulous about their attention at prayers may have no scruple about tale-bearing or uncharitableness. Men who stretch the claims of argument to breaking point in the matter of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, may make no scruple in accepting the whole doctrine of Evolution or Totemism, or the Persistence of Force. Indeed, the likelihood is that in less rational departments of thought they fall into the superstitions of science. To the theological mind few things are more instructive than the interest shown nowadays in spiritualism by scientists of the front rank, whose devotion to reason prevents them recognising to

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the full the claims of faith. It is their peculiar method of making occult compensation for their slighted instincts.

We may now turn from the nature of this scruple of doubt to an examination of its causes. We are not concerned to inquire how far this depends on external circumstances. When speaking of the Problem of Faith we may have suggested that the extreme form of doubt which has now become an epidemic of our epoch, has its roots in the racial characteristics of Western peoples. But to trace the extent to which climate, locality, and other external forces create a psychological atmosphere is not our intention here.

Every inquiry into the origin of intellectual scrupulousness must begin with a recognition of the great, and indeed dominant, part played by the imagination. Not only does imagination usurp the place of reason, but it masquerades as the very power it has ousted. Much of the evil is due to our education, which is concerned with words and aspects rather than with things and with thinking. The insistence upon mathematical sciences has not a little to do with begetting an unruly imagination, seeing that mathematics

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deal chiefly with abstract quantity which appeals to the visual imagination, even under its most abstruse form of algebraic and trigonometrical formulae. Plato's view, that good mathematicians make bad philosophers, is well known. He was but expressing the truth that the extreme accuracy of the mathematical sciences unfits the mind for broad balanced views. Who would ever expect to work out a difficult problem in algebra by making allowances for the working out, or by approaching it with an unbiassed mind, or by being alive to convergent probabilities, or by giving some place to rational authority, or by viewing things on the whole, or by leaving an opening for exceptions? These, indeed, are the very nerves of all philosophic thought. Yet to suggest them to a mathematician is but to raise a smile, so far removed is the mere working out of quantitative relations removed from real thought.

This leads us at once to another cause of doubt, viz. want of true thought. It is not easy at first blush to say what reasoning is or is not. According to our definition, we might be obliged to say that doubt was now due to too much, and now to

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too little reasoning. Men who have acquired a mathematical facility for supplying premisses for any conclusion, and for drawing conclusions from premisses, through Barbara, Celarent, and other syllogistic forms, may engender doubts from their fatal facility. Conclusions or premisses fostering unbelief may be suggested to their minds in youth or middle age. It appears to them an act of disloyalty to their understanding to think that such arguments could ever jeopardise their allegiance to the truth. Soon, perhaps, they form a complete syllogistic expression of the argument. This remains in their mind, and crops up unbidden at all times. So accustomed do they become to the whole chain of argument, and so deft at 'running it through,' so to say, from beginning to end, that no matter where they find themselves set down in it, they can run it up and down almost automatically, until they think it has become a part of their being—when in reality it can hardly be looked upon as part of their thought. But it is clear that this habit of argument-making may easily dispose the mind to doubt; and according as a man holds or does not hold that this is true reasoning, so will he.

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maintain or deny that the scruple of his doubt has been begotten of sound reasoning.

We should be shirking an important part of our examination did we not inquire whether doubt may not have a moral cause. In the case of the morally scrupulous it is not permitted to deny that their scruples often betray faults much more grave than those they scruple to commit. Thus they are almost always wanting in obedience; and they are not seldom proud. When their disobedience springs from pride they are practically incurable. Thus they will feel no scruple in paying little attention to the formal commands of their director. Nor will they lack arguments to support them in their disobedience. They will make little of the opinions of one who is a specialist in moral matters. With no very great experience they will disagree with an outside unbiassed opinion, and headstrongly undertake that most difficult of all works—the cure of their own ailments. In intellectual matters we should be giving unfaithful witness if we did not draw attention to the same possibility of moral causes. It is not for us, nor, indeed, for every one, to say

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whether in this case or that doubt has its roots in some moral defect. We are merely making an examination of the malady in general, which would be far from complete if we denied that doubt could be very vitally connected with disobedience and pride, *i.e.* with a feeble recognition of the authority of others, and a strong recognition of our own.

We may now be prepared to outline the cure of doubt. Briefly, to remove the cause is to remove the effect. In the first place, a thorough diagnosis of the doubt must be made. It is clear that the person least fitted to pronounce judgment is the patient. He alone can state symptoms. But he alone is peculiarly unfitted to draw conclusions. The matter must be entrusted to another. One of the most obvious remedies in extreme cases is a change of scene. Whilst minds dwell in the same place and daily meet the same circumstances, interests, duties, ideas, their mind will continue in the same round of thought. Hence the oft-quoted remedy of a sea-voyage. Newman's voyage in the Mediterranean began the Oxford Movement; his retreat from Oxford to the poverty and silence of Little-

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more ended with his submission to the Holy See. Or to take a case which may come home even more forcibly to us here to-day. Romanes the agnostic became Romanes the believer through taking up his abode under this roof, where he came into touch with the ten thousand spiritual forces of this city, lent as a lesson by ages of faith to an age of doubt. And if change of scene cannot be had, how often do wise guides bid men give over reading and arguing and take to prayer. Was this in Browning's mind when he wrote of 'The Guardian Angel at Fano'?

'I would rest

My head beneath thine, whilst thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast;
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy, and suppressed.'

A further remedy is in the hard-earned control of the imagination. As the imagination is a power for evil it is equally a power for good. It must not be allowed to be a master, as it makes a bad master but a good servant. Where it has really no place it should never be allowed to

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usurp a place. The higher mysteries of God are just those in which the imagination fails to reach the full truth. We should resolutely instruct the imagination that such a doctrine as the Eternal Three in One is beyond its grasp, that the trinity in unity which the mystery contains is beyond mathematics and therefore beyond the imagination.

Lastly, the scruple of doubt can yield only to an earnest and lasting discipline of the will. But we are upon the threshold of momentous thoughts which we would put before you in speaking of the Life of Faith.¹

² Cf. Appendix 11.

VIII

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WHEN the Council of Trent laid down that faith was the 'beginning, the foundation, and the root' of the spiritual life, it recalled men's minds to the fact that faith was not merely a starting-place or a resting-place, as we have already said, but an important function of human personality. Indeed we hope that what we have already said has made it clear that faith is one of the chief personal acts of man, springing from the mental and emotional depths of his nature. If it is supremely true that they only live who love, and they live best who love the first and best, it is no less true that 'this is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ' (John xvii. 3). Faith, hope, charity are the transcendental acts of the human personality, enabling it to realise its highest possibilities by entering into personal relationship with the

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infinite Personality which is at once immanent and transcendent in all phenomena. We should, therefore, be doing an injustice to our subject and to you, if, whilst we had much to say of the nature, object, subject, force, and birth of faith, we had nothing to say of its function as a living, personal act, nay, as one of the highest personal acts of which we men are capable.

At the outset of any attempt to describe the life of faith, the mind cannot help objecting to itself that, even granted that to know is to live, faith can hardly be called life; because it can hardly be called knowledge. Merely looked upon as a logical argument, such an objection has weight with a thinking mind. But when the argument is considered *in situ*, *i.e.* when the scanty and dim knowledge of faith is contrasted with the full and clear knowledge of science, some minds recoil at the thought. They cannot help looking upon the triumphs of science as something real and something overpowering. Science has made real conquests in thought and deed. They see its sway everywhere. It has unlocked the secrets of sea and land. It has tamed and turned to its own use the mightiest

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forces of nature. Its reality is the chief feature of the world of to-day. The sciences dealing with living and lifeless beings are themselves the most living of things, not merely crowding men's minds with countless truths, but adding to men's life endless implements, objects, occupations, employments, pleasures. Thus, to a mind attuned merely to the visible side of visible things, science seems to have deepened life almost as far as life may be deepened; so that the so-called life of faith can only be compared with it as shadow with reality, or as the morning haze with the city of spires, towers, masts, homes, and palaces on which it rests and casts its gloom. We, who look upon the cloud as the reality and the crowded city as but a passing cloud, may well review why it is that to our way of thinking faith is the life of lives; which, if we lose, we should be ill-repaid by the gift of the whole world of science and art and the craftsmanship of man. And as we shall not make faith to be what it is not, nor credit it with what it does not pretend to possess, nor ask of it what it does not profess to give; but rather, as we shall look upon it as knowledge only in part, and dim

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knowledge even at its brightest, we shall feel ourselves called upon to ask why and how is it that such scanty, feeble knowledge can be looked upon in any way as the perfection, and hence as the life of human personality.¹ Two main thoughts will serve to give the answer to these questionings: (1) the economy of trial, and (2) the trial of faith. If we add a third thought, viz. the practice of faith, it will not come as an afterthought but merely as a God-speed to all that you have been so patient to hear; and we, so privileged to speak.

Only a brief survey need be taken of the economy of trial. Whether for good or evil, but as we believe not for evil but for good, the note of life is trial. If there is one truth on which science, philosophy, and religion agree, it is this. It is strange and even pathetic that although life in the abstract has been defined by science as mere correspondence with environment, or adjustment of interior to exterior relations, yet the life of the living beings that are, or were, is best described in terms of mutual struggle. By a curious reaction the merely

¹ Cf. Appendix 12.

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scientific account of organic existence has reverted to the hatred-theory of Hobbes. The science that was with us some twenty years ago, and still in great part survives, could interpret organic activity, not in terms of love but of hatred, nor of harmony but of dissension, nor of peace but of war. The battle is to the strong; life is a warfare; the weakest come off worst. This is merely to say that all beings are on their trial, and the higher the being the greater the trial. Thus it was granted that the laws of struggle, selection, survival had only a metaphorical application to the inorganic world, which by its very quality of lifelessness had been fitted to survive during the countless ages linking our own highly organised cosmos with the nebular chaos, or star-dust, which science assumed as the postulate of its thought. And in the lowest forms of protozoa it was recognised that the very simplicity of their organisation gave them peculiar capabilities of survival when more organised and higher types of life were doomed to extinction. But life wherever found was always found to be a process of trial not merely between one kind of organism and another, but between the various

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inherited or acquired qualities of one and the same specific or individual organism.

If science with its doctrine of matter and forces recognises life as a trial, philosophy with its insistence on ideas is not disposed to quarrel with science. The difficulty everywhere resisting the action of ideas and the realisation of ideals is nowhere recognised more distressingly than in philosophy. Even were it granted that to the eyes of the philosophers the lower grades of life presented no spectacle of frustrated ideals or impossible ideas, yet human life, with its wide abyss between 'is' and 'ought,' fully makes up the deficiency.

But it is to the Christian theologian above all that life presents itself as a process and time of trial, as a struggle not so much with competitors as with obstacles, in the way of a full and everlasting existence. The battle is within. Life is warfare, not merely nor mostly with what is without, but with what is within, with that almost 'other-self' which would conquer only to degrade. Everywhere the soul that would mount feels the earthward pull of what is worst in its own being. When it would be at one, it realises

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all too keenly its divided self. When it would rest in order to renew the struggle, it is urged to sink down and give over struggling. Its lot is everywhere opposition; its duty, a struggle; its reward, a victory; its peace, a short truce at nightfall, and on a battlefield.

The reason of this may be found in the fact that trial means opposition; and, as things are, opposition is necessary to bring out man's full strength of character and soul. Blows aimed at the void are not so heavy as those struck at some definite obstacle. Physical strength is rarely seen at its utmost unless in the throes of a great struggle. Delirium will often give a dying man the strength of three. Even so the soul of a man might lie fallow were it not for the opposition and trials that close in upon him. Job surrounded by his children, his servants, and his flocks, would have been merely an eastern sheik; Job holding to God in spite of poverty, leprosy, a lonely home, the scoffing of friends, the fury of Satan, is a lofty foretype of another Outcast and another and divinely human life.

Moreover, the power of acting is not so great as the power of acting in spite of opposition.

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Existence is greatest when it includes resistance. To do good is something less than to draw good out of evil. This, indeed, is God's highest external attribute, and is in its divine fullness incommunicable. Yet a measure of this attribute is communicated to human beings, and especially to the human wills which encounter opposition and evil only to draw a result that is good. When God has given a soul this strength, He may be said to have endowed it, as far as a creature can be endowed, with creative power.

Thus the mere view of trial as a necessary condition for developing our human faculties should shed light on our second thought, viz. the trial of faith. We should be prepared to realise that only through the gate of intellectual trial can a man enter into possession of his own mind. If the human intelligence is to be perfected by the truth, the law of trial would lead us to expect that the intelligence shall be beset by untruth. If the mind at last is to grasp the highest things with the certitude of sight, its particular trial would naturally be the dimness and half-light of faith.

We should therefore be prepared to find that

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in the intellectual sphere mysteries exercise an important function. Indeed it is not what the mind sees clearest that forms and moulds it.¹ Hence the strange phenomenon that mere physical science, unless it be pursued to the sphere of metaphysics, has little or no mind-forming power. I do not mean that the volitional act of attending to any study is not educational. Even the monotonous droning of children at their daily task of addition and multiplication gives some sort of mental training in attention and obedience, which, however, has no particular connection with the subject of addition or multiplication. Whilst fully recognising this, it is still true to say that the mere physical and even mathematical sciences of themselves have no mind-forming function. The reason of this probably is, that even as mathematics deal with one or other aspect of quantity or matter, so does physical science deal with one or other aspect of force. Such aspects have no direct educational effect on the mind of a man. It is when we rise from direct cognition of matter and the forces of matter to the region of ideas that the mind is

¹ Cf. Appendix 13.

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found to be moulded by the process of thought. We have already shown how great a part the will plays in all the higher planes of pure thought. And as the will is the motive power of character, it is evident that no deep study of the ultimate concepts can leave the mind where it was before such study began. But the truths which are the object of religion are of still greater power in demanding or moulding a definite character of mind and heart. Were we to be asked the secret reason of this, we should be prompted to reply that whereas mathematics are concerned with material quantity, science with material force, and philosophy with immaterial ideas, religion is concerned with persons and especially with the Divine Personality of God.

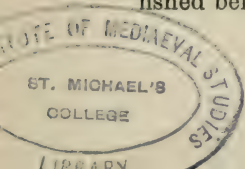
Thus we are led on to ask ourselves what good can come of belief in mysteries, which are of the essence of that religion of science and that science of religion which are now so conspicuous in the world of thought. That some, and those not the lesser class of minds, are drawn to a study of mysteries, whether in nature or God is no matter of argument but of experience. There is, assuredly, on the other hand, a class of minds

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quite satisfied with what they can easily grasp. The passing shadows of things real, which pour into their consciousness through their outer senses, are enough for them. These they go on to group into classes, and even to use for some practical purpose of life. If we could liken one state of mind to another, we should compare them to those who can spend hours at a window patiently watching the endless procession of busy, anxious, weary, joyful, sad, angry, radiant, down-cast faces that frame themselves in the pane; and pass quickly away. Or they are like children with toy-spades eagerly building their sand into toy castles for their mock battles and victories, careless that the tide will soon level their work and blot out all that their wearied arms had wrought. There are many minds, who, heedless of the coming oblivion that will so soon overtake the worker and his work, are yet stimulated to toil by the obviousness of the fragile towers of sand which they can see growing up under their eyes. Research without much prospect of success is impossible to them. They cannot live in half-lights. They are impatient of half-views. They must have results; nor can they brook delay.

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To suggest that the problem they are minded to solve is too deep for anything more than a proximate solution is merely to dry up within them all the springs of energy. They will turn to chemistry because, here, at least, they can experiment and verify; or to biology, because they can observe and classify; or to mathematics, because the most abstruse problems are patient of a concise answer. But they cannot rise to the sphere of religion, because the mysteries that gird us round seem in their concrete minds to present no definite object and no certain outcome. Yet on the other hand there are many minds to which the things that are seen are only symbols and tokens of other things that are but believed. It is not central, but peripheral vision that quenches their thirst for knowledge. What they see and can see through is no zest to thought. They are like men born on the shores of the ocean, who cannot satisfy their sea instincts by excursions over the narrow waters of a lake. It is useless to urge that they can row over the lake in a day, or a week, or a month, that they can explore it by themselves, that it has all been fathomed, and mapped, and fished before. To minds of their cast, all this is



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but arguing them into a keener appreciation of their boundless ocean, which traversed and explored by ten thousand bold seamen, has unexplored seas and unfathomed depths for those in whom the love of adventure is still a ruling power. Macaulay has written a splendid defence of the utilitarian view of science. But in spite of his brilliant rhetoric, it is, as it always has been, the mystic view of the world's forces that has added to the forces of the world. Had it been proved a century ago that electricity had no further outcome or mystery or law than that of serving to cure paralysis or drive a dynamo, none of the great minds who have developed the science would have paid any heed to its development. At the present time the deeper sort of thinkers on inorganic science are bent on tracing electricity further and further back, until it coincides, at least to the human eye, with the nature of all visible beings. To minds like these it is the very impossibility of ever reaching the frontiers of thought that leads them on in their thinking. They are convinced that deeper and deeper as they go new depths will still be found. Nor is the impossibility of thought which leads

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them onward mere irrationality. No sound mind could persevere in tracing out mere irrational and chance arrangements of beings. To listen long to the incoherent muttering of the mad will often bring on madness. Men are not stimulated to study nature, because they look on it as incoherent, chaotic, without a law, a purpose, an answer. On the contrary, whilst they know it has an inwardness, a law, a purpose, an answer, a master, yet they are not ignorant that their own answer is provisional, imperfect, promissory, which must grow with their growth of mind and soul. All this is but saying that the higher type of minds—the architects and not mere builders of thought—are those to whom the business of life is not the pursuit of those lesser questions which can easily be formulated and as easily answered, nor of those lesser duties that can be easily recognised before and after fulfilment, but of those obstinate questionings which cannot fully be understood nor settled, and of those high aims which cannot, at least in this scheme of things, be fully reached. In a word, the chief conviction of the higher minds is the limitlessness of reason and the limitations of their reason, or, of the

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need of faith and mystery for the development at once of mind and soul. Not that the limitations of our reasons are its stimulus, but that the conviction of the omnipresence of reason leads us onward in our thought. For though we cannot rest life on a *Non-video*, we can, and the deeper thinkers will say that we must, rest it on a *Credo*.

We have thus developed the truth that to some, and that the higher class of minds, no intellectual life can be led without intellectual trial; and this on the supposition that there is nothing more than the subjective mind and objective nature. But if it is an objective fact that the omnipresent rationality of nature is due to the omnipresence of an intellectual Being, it is evident that intellectual trial will become more imperative. An infinite Person will give rise to endless difficulties. He will be the answer to all else; but He Himself will be the great enigma. In His light all shadows will flee, save those which He Himself must cast. His shoulders will bear the burden of the world; but who will bear the burden of His infinity? Thus if we are to have true notions of God we must conceive of Him not merely as an end, but as a

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beginning, not merely as an answer but as a question, not merely as a parable but as a paradox, not merely as Omega but as Alpha, not merely as nearer man than the soul of a man, but above him on the everlasting hills. Throned as the Holiest in the height, He can be scanned only from afar, and may either disappear behind the clouds gathered by His immensity or may grow indistinguishable from them whilst we gaze. The faith we have in Him must always be an effort to transcend the arguments which the mind itself can marshal for or against Him. To see Him we must not merely use, but focus, the inward eye; and such an effort must always be amongst the greatest and most momentous the mind can make. To swerve but a hair's-breadth to left or right will be to blur His image into a caricature. Nor when we have fixed and focused our mind can we gaze directly upon His being, throned in blinding light. Even as men use a darkened lens to look upon the sun, so must faith ever weave a veil to shade its eye when it would gaze upon God.

True thought of nature and of God leads us to see the need and nature of intellectual trial.

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Granted that there is a rational objective universe which we discover but do not create; granted, too, that this rational unity is the handiwork and therefore the expression of an infinite reason, it is clear that no one can conceive justly of this world and its Maker by thinking that human reason can measure both or can only accept what it has fully grasped. If what we have written has not been written in vain, it should be admitted that even in natural knowledge of the world and God there is room and need for that natural faith whereby for the time being, yet without hesitation, we take upon trust what we trust finally to see and grasp. Nor can such natural faith be looked upon as the dwarfing but the perfecting of our intellectual life. Characteristic of the highest type of minds, which it stimulates to these prolonged meditations of the genius and of the mystic, it calls forth the highest powers of man's thought.

So much is true if the eternal truth has spoken only through the world; but it becomes truer still if the eternal truth has spoken through the Word, and especially if the message from on high has been a *Sursum Corda* to the heights.

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Faith, always a need in the natural order of things and thoughts, is doubly a need if God has founded a supernatural order. If trial is the lot of every mind and heart struggling to live natural life to its fullest, it must especially be the lot of those for whom the fullness of this natural life is but the shell of an inner, higher life.

Love is the secret of life; and, to follow the teaching of St. Augustine, love never yet existed nor could exist without faith. It is often said that life should be based on experience. But what friendship has ever begun in experience? Has it not rather been begotten of insight, and that mysterious likeness of thought and will which makes two souls ring in unison almost at first sight? But to the mind of a Christian the coming of Christ has been the coming of a supernatural love. The secret of all God's dealings is love; but of his latter dealings the secret is affection carried to the folly of the cross—self-forgetfulness deepened into self-emptying—love unto death. To the Christian the widest, fullest synthesis of the world is that afforded by the theological idea of a personal God leading all things towards our personal good. All other

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syntheses though true are only incompletely true. Faith quickened by charity sees furthest and truest. St. Paul prays for the Christians of Ephesus, 'That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts, that being rooted and founded in charity you may be able to . . . know the charity of God that surpasseth all knowledge' (Eph. iii. 17-19), and this prayer of paradox is amongst the best that has come down to us from the Doctor of the Gentiles. It is evident that if Christianity is a revelation on God's side of greater love, it must demand from man's side a still fuller exercise of faith. Here on this earth where shadows are even more natural than light, the light and shadow can only be equally increased. In the sheer darkness of night there can be no shadow because no sunshine; in the twilight of dawn and evening substance and shadow all but melt into one; but with the coming of the midday sun light and shadow are at the fullest. Granted, then, that Jesus Christ is the highest revelation of and from God, and that, as we might expect, He is a revelation of God's love, we should be surprised if no further mysteries were offered to

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us for our belief. Jesus Christ Himself is the first mystery, even though in a true sense He is a very Lucifer, a bearer of light. Seen from a distance He is all light, and before His coming the shadows flee. Yet is He always a light that at once attracts and overcomes our gaze. Moreover His personality seems to illumine the mysterious nature of God, chasing from the summit of Calvary all the shadows that cling about the divine attributes of justice and of mercy. Yet He does not cast out all shadow; but changes one shadow into another and a deeper which without His word and warrant would be too hard for human minds to hold. Predestination gives place to the Trinity; the mystery of the divine attributes is put to flight by the greater mystery of the divine Life. Under the yoke of Christ we are called upon to higher destinies and to closer communion with the Most High. Such communion cannot wholly be won; yet it may be prepared for, and in asking of man to take upon trust the mysteries of God's inner life of thought and love, and outer work of mercy and redemption, this preparation of mind and soul is fully wrought out.

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With this thought in our minds we find ourselves on the threshold of our last subject of meditation. Trial is the lot of every perfect life; intellectual and moral trial is the lot of all those who would know some little of the ultimate being of the world and God. The especial trial of faith is to hold to what we do not see in spite of what we do see, and to hold to it on the word of One, 'like unto the Son of Man,' whom we feel we can trust. The task is one of difficulty. Faith is an effort, a venture, an enterprise. It could not be worth much if it cost little. Difficulties rise up unbidden around the soul that would believe. In sensitive minds this begets a feeling of great weariness or self-reproach, which can only be put to rest by a clear view of the difference between ignorance and denial, even as the distress of other souls can only be quieted by knowing when temptation crosses the border line and becomes sin. In these kindred matters of the mind and will the same phenomena and laws are to be seen. Moral virtue is not easy to us, nor does it come first-hand. There is one law in our mind, another in our members. Unlawful objects suddenly presented to the soul

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cannot help wringing from us an indeliberate and irresponsible consent. This indeliberate bent towards what is at once pleasurable and unlawful is the raw material of sanctity. It is the battle-field of the human drama. As things go, far from being all bad, it makes heroic goodness possible. Our work in life will ever be to keep a watch upon this forbidden impulse of the heart, to curb its impetuosity, to confine it within bounds, to prevent it passing from an impulse into a deliberate act. Slay it we cannot. Nor would it be well for us if we could. But we may quell, and bind, if not break it. We may even bring it on the whole under law, not indeed in its own stronghold but in its outworks where impulse and reason meet together. But whilst life lasts, and the operations of our inner life are so hard to unravel, there must always be a mystery connected with the passing of sinless temptation into sinful consent. Yet temptation is not sin; though it often perplexes the sensitive soul to disentangle one from the other, amidst the shock and din of the struggle of life.

The same law teaches us that ignorance is not denial. Now faith is not full knowledge, but

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partial knowledge and partial ignorance. We see only in part. And often what is unseen appears to give the lie to what is seen. And though faith is not partly true and partly false, but partly seen and partly unseen, yet it sometimes happens that our apprehension of faith is partly true and partly false. Moreover, the real objects of faith are so far removed from natural ways of knowing that even under the light of faith we cannot prove their existence but only their possibility of existence. Now what is possible, may be; and what may be, may not be. Hence the mind that looks merely at the object of faith and not on the guarantee of faith will experience a feeling of repulsion, of darkness, of ignorance which it will mistake for denial. This feeling will cause it great pain when it contrasts the feeling of satisfaction, light, knowledge, which it experiences when viewing the world presented to it by its external senses. But for its consolation it should remember that faith is certitude rather than knowledge. It is the calm reliance which a mind places on another higher mind. It is not an immediate contact with an object, but an intercommunion of mind with mind. And thus

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when difficulties against the object of our faith arise after having once been laid, the mind should turn instinctively from the object believed to the Person whom it believes, just as in temptations against the virtue of purity, the moment of temptation is the most ill-fitted for a discussion of either side of the argument. In the stress of temptation it is ever the best strategy to say *Credo Domine*, or *Amo Domine*, according as it is in mind or heart that the battle is being waged. When the attack has lulled, and our souls are once more at peace, it may be well for us briefly to review the reasons on which we bow our reason or our heart to the yoke of Christ. But we must always be on the watch lest our very effort to keep off the foe may bring him near. We are never nearer attack than when we are repairing our damaged walls. Scrupulous souls are warned against raising up under the pretence of self-examination the very temptations they would allay. So, too, in faith and purity, undue searching out of reasons may endanger rather than strengthen our virtue.

Such counsel must not be construed into an acknowledgment that faith is an ignorance which

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has nothing to say for itself, that it is suspicious of inquiry, that it begets narrowness of mind, that it is incompatible with science. On the contrary, the only thing that faith is incompatible with is irreverence, the only quality it begets is breadth of view, the only attitude it suspects is dogmatism, the only word it says of itself is that it is the offspring of eternal truth. It will be found that though each dogma of the faith has much to say for itself—many defenders and ample apologetics—it has never claimed to rest upon its arguments and its apologists, but upon the Word of God. Moreover, though each item of the revelation, as one may see in such a book as the *Summa Contra Gentes*, has its own line of defence and therefore its own bases of activity, it borrows more from the whole than it imparts to the whole. The Christian revelation is not a mere group of isolated truths which a man may hedge round in his own mind for development and defence. Nor is it even a framework into which all else may fit, and from which all else is distinct. It is another and higher point of view; it is a fresh nucleus of the whole organism of thought. Faith's best proof, then, is that from

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its light all things and thoughts borrow light; and that around it as a centre, as a root, or if you will as a cell, all else finds a natural place. The best defence of faith, then, is the unity begotten of faith, which if a man seizes and holds fast, no mere skirmish of logic will avail to dislodge him from his acceptance of the surer way, the higher truth, the fuller life.

Such strategy of logic awaits man most of all on the threshold of life. In a parable full of the lesson of the separation between things seen and unseen, Our Saviour speaks of the men who excused themselves from the marriage feast, one on the plea that he had bought a farm, another, that he had bought a yoke of oxen, another, that he had married a wife. For them, the business of life was just beginning. The eventful choice was to be made. Before them were life and death, things seen and unseen, success and everlasting failure. It is pathetic that the great renunciation had to be made and a side chosen at a time of life when they were, to a great extent, peculiarly unfitted to make the choice and accomplish the renunciation. The world was just opening out its fascinating pano-

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rama before them; unseen things were all but completely unseen, yet the choice had to be made then, for the wedding feast was set and the Master would not wait. On the other hand, and because of the parable, may we not question whether youth is not the best time for making choice of God? What better seed-time than spring? When may devotion to a leader be looked for if not in the years of enthusiasm? When can a side be chosen for eternal life if not when sides are being chosen in this passing life? And even in the choosing of a path or a partner of life man is left to those years of youth when nothing appeals to the soul save as a venture and an enterprise. When the short years of youth have gone, and enthusiasm, poetry, heroism have gone with them, who would say that the soul of a man was then only fitted to use this world for the conquest of another world, and to reach beyond the things that are seen to the dim land of things believed? You whom it has been my privilege to address have faith as an inheritance. You know not how soon it may be set before you as a choice. Nor will the choice be harder but easier, because, having found it as an

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heritance and therefore as a trust, you can say with one whose hold on the things of faith remains as an example: 'For we are the children of saints; and we look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from Him.'¹

¹ Tob. ii. 18. Cf. Appendix 13.

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CONFERENCE II

(1)

THE following scheme may serve to make clear the difference between the attitudes of Atheism, Agnosticism, and Scepticism :—

Atheist	{ I am certain there is no God ; therefore, I am certain God cannot be known.
Agnostic	{ I am not certain there is no God ; but I am certain God cannot be known.
Sceptic	{ I am not certain there is no God ; moreover, I am not certain God cannot be known.

The following scheme may serve to contrast Atheism, Agnosticism, and Scepticism with Faith :—

SUPERNATURAL ORDER.		
	Existence.	Cognoscibility.
ATHEISM, . . .	Denies, . . .	Denies.
AGNOSTICISM, .	Doubts, . . .	Denies.
SCEPTICISM, .	Doubts, . . .	Doubts.
FAITH, ...	Affirms, . . .	Affirms.

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It would therefore seem that the above analysis of attitudes is complete. To some minds, doubtless, it would also seem that of the four attitudes given Agnosticism is the least consistent.

It may be added that whereas Faith is a belief in what we do not see, Scepticism is a disbelief in what we do see.

(2)

It will be seen that the Council has made its own the following passage from St. Thomas. 2^a, 2^{ae}, Qu. 2, Art. 4 :—

‘In reply, be it said, that a man must take on faith, not only such things as are above reason, but even such things as may be known by reason ; and this for three causes :—

‘First : so that a man may the more speedily reach the knowledge of divine truth. For that science which proves the existence of God and other facts about God is set to be learned last, and when other sciences are presupposed. And thus it is only after a long span of life that a man can reach the knowledge of God.

‘Secondly : so that the knowledge of God may be the more widespread. For there are many who can make no headway with science, either on account of their dullness of mind, or of the duties and needs of daily life, or of their sluggishness to learn. And all such as these would be barred from the knowledge of God, if divine things were not set before them by way of faith.

‘Thirdly : on account of certitude. For man’s reason has many shortcomings in divine things ; whereof a sign is, that philosophers who have thought about human

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things have made many mistakes, and have thought contrary things. And hence, in order that there might be sure and certain knowledge with men about God, it was necessary that divine things should be set before them by way of faith, as spoken by God who cannot lie.'

CONFERENCE III

(3)

The above classification, on page 65, may be represented schematically, thus :—

SUPERNATURAL ORDER.		
	Ontological.	Logical.
VATICAN, . .	Affirms, . .	Affirms.
ONTOLOGISM, .	Affirms, . .	Denies.
AGNOSTICISM, .	Doubts, . .	Affirms.
RATIONALISM, .	Denies, . .	Denies.

It may perhaps appear to some that Agnosticism is, again, the most inconsequent system.

CONFERENCE IV

(4)

The following profound analysis of St. Thomas may be studied :—

'In reply, be it said, that faith implies assent of the

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mind to what is taken on faith. Now the mind assents to anything in two ways :

‘First: because it is moved thereto by the object itself—which is either self-known, as are first principles, of which we have understanding (*intellectus*)—or else is known through something else, as in the case of conclusions, of which we have knowledge (*scientia*).

‘Secondly: the mind assents to a thing, not because it is sufficiently moved by its proper object, but by choice, inasmuch as it voluntarily takes one side rather than another. And if this is with a fear of the other side, it is *opinion*; but if it be with certitude and without such fear, it is faith.’ (II^a II^{ae}, Qu. 1, Art. 4.)

We may represent this doctrine schematically, thus :—

ASSENT	{	Caused by {	Directly	.	.	INTELLECTUS.
		Object {	Indirectly	.	.	SCIENTIA.
	{	Caused by {	With fear of opposite	OPINIO.		
		Choice {	Without ,,	,,		FIDES.

CONFERENCE V

(5)

The whole subject of the Will and Faith is so interesting and important that we may set down a few texts which are well worth our thought :—

Faith is intellectual *obedience*; and hence it is an exercise of will-power.

Gal. iii. 1: ‘O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not *obey the truth*?’

2 Cor. x. 4: ‘For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty to God unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels; (5) and every

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height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God ; and *bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ.*'

Matt. v. 8 : 'Blessed are the clean of heart ; for they shall see God.'

1 Cor. xiii. 4-7 : 'Charity . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things.'

St. Th. II^a II^{ae}, Qu. 4, Art. 7, 3^m : 'Obedience sometimes implies an inclination of the will to obey divine commandments. In this sense it is not a special virtue, but is included generally in every virtue, since all acts of the virtues come under the commandments of the divine law. And in this way obedience is needed for faith.'

St. Thomas also notices that faith sometimes stands in need of Fortitude and Humility.

II^a II^{ae}, Qu. 4, Art. 7 : 'To withdraw obstacles is a function of an accidental cause. Hence certain virtues may be said to be prior to faith, inasmuch as they withdraw the obstacles to believing. Thus *fortitude* takes away any inordinate fear preventing faith ; and *humility* takes away pride whereby the mind refuses to submit to the truth of faith.'

The following passage from G. W. Ward must be given in full :—

'There is a large number of truths which are "objectively" certain to me, but which I do not appropriate as subjectively certain, because my will fails in its proper duty. My will fails, we say, to contend duly against my prejudices or my indolence, and to enjoin on my intellect its one reasonable course. Now the fact on which we would here lay special stress is this. In no other case is there any-

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thing like such urgent need for the will thus intensely and energetically to exert itself as in the Antitheist's dealings with Religious Truth. For this statement we can at once give *two reasons*, and we need mention no others. In the first place, Religious Truth is inexpressibly *startling* to him. Consider one who has long been in the habit of contemplating this world as the only cognisable sphere of action, and of regarding his fellow-men as the only persons with whom he can cultivate any kind of relation. To one so habituated, the notion is bewildering beyond description that this life is known with certainty to be no more than an infinitesimal part of his existence; that his relations with his fellow-men are comparatively of no importance except in their bearing on his relations with an Invisible Eternal Being; lastly, that this Being created him, and if He do not receive due obedience will severely chastise him in a future life. Why, the mathematical theory of infinitesimals is immeasurably less startling and bewildering to the learned than are the doctrines here exhibited to such a one as we have here described. And we thus indeed come across a second truth intended by M. Lapruné, when he says that religious knowledge is acquired by a kind of "faith." I find the dogmata of the Blessed Trinity and Transubstantiation most enigmatical, startling, and perplexing. But my reason shows me that they cannot be proved self-contradictory, and I know, certainly, on God's word they are true. I exercise therefore laudable firmness of faith by enjoining on my intellect the acceptance of these enigmatical, startling, and perplexing dogmata. In a very similar way, when reason has proved to me the

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certainty of God's existence, I exercise firmness of religious assent by enjoining on my intellect the acceptance of that (if so be) enigmatical, startling, and perplexing truth. This "firmness of religious assent" is plainly very analogous to firmness of faith, though (as a matter of words) for ourselves we see great objections against calling it faith at all. It may be worth while to add (that in our humble judgment) there are Theistic truths cognisable by Reason which are quite as enigmatical, startling, and perplexing, as any disclosed by Revelation.

'To our mind, e.g., the demonstrated doctrines of God's simplicity, when duly pondered, is even more enigmatical, startling, and perplexing, than is that of the Blessed Trinity. Then, secondly, these religious doctrines are not only startling and perplexing to the confirmed Antitheist, but intensely repulsive. . . . We say that the ethical tenets on which our Antitheist acts are precisely in the number of those which a Christian would describe as the tenets of corrupt human nature; the tenets to which man's evil inclinations solicit him. Go back to the ages of faith. It was then the doctrine firmly held by all Christians—so firmly that the mass of them did not conceive any other as possible—that a man is really "virtuous" so far, and so far only, as he uses this life exclusively for his opportunity of serving God and gaining future bliss. Yet, notwithstanding this fact, there was an enormous multitude who "saw and approved," indeed, "what is better," but "followed what is worse"; who made earthly objects the end of their existence. Now the modern Antitheistic tenets precisely canonise what the mediævalist anathematised; they represent the in-

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terests of this life as those which alone demand attention from a wise and good man. If corrupt human instincts (as the Christian calls them) were so influential when the whole world accounted them detestable, how enormous will be their power in favour of a theory which enables its advocates to pursue them without self reproach.'—*Dublin Review*, July 1882: 'Philosophy of Theistic Controversy,' by G. W. Ward, pp. 80-82.

This whole passage is but a commentary on the verse of St. Thomas :

'Ad firmandum *cor sincerum*
Sola fides sufficit.'

We may be allowed to note an important parallel between Science and Faith. The unifying principle of Science is Causality. Now without identifying ourselves with the Kantian doctrine of *a priori* forms, we may remark that the category of causality is not due to an intellectual source. No process of thought or of reasoning can give us the idea of influx without which causality would be a nonentity. Even in processes of pure ratiocination from premisses to a conclusion, the premisses are only metaphorically the cause of the conclusion. From the will, then, we derive the category which unifies the whole of empiric knowledge. And thus when the advocates of a supra-empiric, or, to be more accurate, a supra-rational, knowledge maintain that this knowledge is largely dependent on the will, they are only asserting its likeness to the normal function of mind and heart.

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CONFERENCE VI

(6)

‘To say that a man is *converted* means that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual centre of his energy.’—Wm. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 196.

‘Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon incidental to the passage from the child’s small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity.’—*Ibid.*, p. 199.

Conversion may thus be looked upon as a change from objectivity to subjectivity, when the outward becomes inward, and the soul *turns in* upon itself and upon the Infinite who is within.

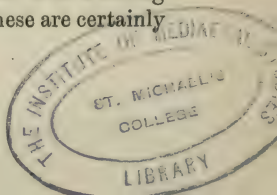
(7)

The late Bishop of Clifton, W. R. Brownlow, D.D., speaks thus of the ‘conversions’ witnessed outside the Church :—

‘Our sketch would hardly be complete unless we attempted some explanation, on Catholic principles, of those spiritual phenomena which we have described and which formed the basis of Mr. Aitken’s system.

‘The objective reality of them cannot, we think, be seriously called in question. The explanation is not very easy. Görres divides his celebrated work into “La Mystique Divine, La Mystique Naturelle, and La Mystique Diabolique.”

‘Some may be disposed to reckon these phenomena among the latter, because they are found so much among heretics, and are often associated with a strong antipathy to the Catholic Church. These are certainly



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points to be considered. Those who would put them down to mere natural causes have to account for the fact that the moving cause is always the bringing home to the mind the thought of God, His judgments, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and the efficacy of His precious Blood.

‘These are not natural but supernatural motives. We believe that all three of these influences are at work. The first movement of the human soul towards God must come from God, and be due to a special act of divine grace. ‘The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.’ But can that word be spoken by one who is not sent by the true Church? Such a one cannot preach Christ fully; but, when we consider the infinite love of God, and His desire for the salvation of souls, we can understand how God might make use of the fragments of truth, still happily held by multitudes separated from the true Church, to bring souls back to Himself.

‘There is less difficulty in admitting this, so far as the conviction of sin goes, than in admitting the divine element in the sense of pardon and peace which the Methodists and others rejoice in. But, supposing their contrition is sincere, sovereign, and supernatural, and is perfected by the love of God, their pardon and justification follow at once; and if they know nothing of the Sacrament of Penance, this ignorance would not stand in their way.

‘If anything like a large number of those who are “converted,” after Mr. Aitken’s method, found their way into the Church, Catholics would have little difficulty in admitting the action of divine grace in their case. Unfortunately, the contrary is the fact;

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their "conversion" seems only to increase their self-satisfaction, and to render them more impervious to Catholic influence. "Happy Jack" or "Hallelujah Polly" will tell you they have found their Saviour, they have got their sins forgiven, and are quite happy; what do they want more? We do not wish to shirk the difficulty; and, perhaps, after all, we should do wisely to leave the case of these outsiders unsolved: "What have I to do to judge them that are without? For them that are without God will judge" (1 Cor. v. 12-13).

‘However, we venture upon an explanation.

‘In the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, the eighth Rule for the Discerning of Spirits in the second week is this: "When consolation is without cause, although there be in it no deception, since then it comes alone from God our Lord; yet a spiritual person, to whom God gives such consolation, ought with great vigilance and attention to consider and distinguish between the actual proper time of that consolation and the subsequent time in which the soul still remains fervent, and feels the divine favour and the remains of the past consolation; because, oftentimes, in this second period the soul forms various propositions, either by its own actions in accordance with its usual habits and their consequences and its own judgment, or through the action of a good angel, or a bad one, which propositions and designs are not given to it immediately by God our Lord; and hence it is necessary that they should be well discussed before such entire consent be yielded to them, as, to reduce them to practice."

‘This Rule appears to us to give a clue to these perplexing spiritual phenomena.

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‘Supposing a person who has never known the Church or her teaching is truly converted by an act of divine grace. While that grace acts, the spirit of God is inspiring that soul. But when that period has passed, the habitual thoughts and ideas resume their current, errors and prejudices mingle themselves with the new lights, and the person unconsciously imagines that it is God that inspires him with aversion to the Church, while it is really only the consequences of his ordinary habit of mind. This appears to us also to explain another very shocking phenomenon. . . . The calling into lively exercise the higher spiritual emotions sets the whole inner nature of man on fire, and if his passions have not been brought into subjection, they are apt to carry him away with a frightful mingling of false spirituality and sensuality. He considers himself above all law, and is like the Corinthian Christians, “to whom nothing was wanting in any grace,” yet who were “puffed up and had not rather mourned” over the grossest impurity.

‘We submit this application of one of St. Ignatius’ Rules to those who are better acquainted with them than ourselves.’—‘Robert Aitken, a Sketch’: *Dublin Review*, October 1899, pp. 20-23.

(8)

Page 162, St. Augustine (in Psalmos, 32): ‘I have found many unwilling to become Christians, because they prided themselves on their good lives. They would say, A man should live uprightly. What could Christ command me? To live uprightly? I do live uprightly. I neither murder, nor thief, nor steal. I covet no man’s goods. I am untainted with adultery.

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Let any one find in my life something to condemn, and he who condemns me shall make a Christian.'

(9)

The late Canon Bathurst, of Stone, has expressed the problem of loyalty in a few sentences: 'It is quite true there is a great responsibility in deciding that we are not in the Church; but then, in the case of those before whom the question has been brought, it seems to me there is a like responsibility in deciding and acting as though we were. One may be propping up what is a sham, and so opposing the Church.'

(10)

Newman wrote to T. W. Allies, October 9, 1845: 'May I have only one-tenth part as much faith as I have intellectual conviction where the truth lies. I do not suppose any one can have had such combined reasons poured upon him that he is doing right. So far, I am most blessed; but alas! my heart is so hard, and I am taking things so much as a matter of course, that I have been quite frightened lest I should not have faith and contrition enough to gain the sacraments. Perhaps faith and reason are incompatible in one person, or nearly so.'—*A Life's Decision*, by T. W. Allies, chap. iii. p. 78.

CONFERENCE VII

(11)

We need not say that in this matter of doubt Butler's *Analogy* is an imperative study. It is difficult

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to think that anything can be added to his masterly chapter (Part II. chap. vi.) on the Supposed Deficiency in the Proof of Revelation, from which we shall quote a characteristic passage. 'First, the evidence of religion not appearing obvious may constitute one particular part of some men's trial in the religious sense; as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise or vicious neglect of their understanding in examining or not examining into that evidence. There seems no possible reason to be given why we may not be in a state of moral probation with regard to the exercise of our understanding upon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our behaviour in common affairs. And I suppose it is to be laid down for certain that the same character, the same inward principle which, after a man is convinced of the truth of religion, renders him obedient to the precepts of it, would, were he not thus convinced, set him about an examination of it, upon its system and evidence being offered to his thoughts. . . .

'Secondly, it appears to be a thing as evident, though it is not so much attended to, that if upon consideration of religion the evidence of it should seem to any persons doubtful, in the highest possible degree, *even the doubtful evidence will, however, put them into a general state of probation in the moral and religious sense.* For suppose a man to be really in doubt whether such a person had not done him the greatest favour, or whether his whole temporal interest did not depend on that person, no one who had any sense of gratitude or prudence could possibly consider himself in the same situation with regard to such person as if he had no such doubt. In truth it is as just to

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say that certainty and doubt are the same, as to say that situations now mentioned would leave a man as entirely at liberty in point of gratitude or prudence as he would be were he certain he had received no favour from such person, or that he no way depended upon him. . . . The ground of these observations, and that which renders them just and true, is that . . . *doubt as much presupposes evidence—lower degrees of evidence—as belief supposes higher, and certainty higher still.*'

CONFERENCE VIII

(12)

. . . homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen,
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far-sinking into splendour—without end !
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems !

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Oh! 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald
turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name
In fleecy folds voluminous enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I SAW was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude.

(Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, bk. ii.)

(13)

The following passages from St. Thomas will serve to complete the doctrine of this Conference:

Cont. Gent., Pt. I. c. 5.—'Perhaps it would appear to some that a man should not have proposed to his belief such things as reason is incapable of investigat-

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ing, seeing that the divine wisdom provides for each according to the measure of his nature. Wherefore we must show that it is necessary for man that such things as exceed his reason should be offered to his belief.

‘First: for no one seeks a thing, either in wish or deed, unless it is foreknown. Hence because by divine Providence men are ordained to a higher good than human weakness can reach in this life, the mind must needs be lifted up to something higher than the reason can at present reach. For thus it may learn to propose and pursue what goes beyond the whole state of this present life. This is especially the case with the Christian religion, which especially makes promise of spiritual and eternal boons. Hence many things are set forth in it which go beyond the sense of man. But the Old Law which gave temporal promises only, set forth few things beyond the discovery of man.

‘Secondly: truths of this kind should be offered to men’s belief in order that they may have a truer knowledge of God. For then only do we know God truly when we hold Him to be beyond all that a man may think of Him, seeing that the divine Being outstrips all human thought. And thus when facts about God are set before a man which outstrip his reason, man is thereby strengthened in the conviction that God is beyond all that may be thought.

‘Thirdly: there is a further advantage, viz. to keep down presumption, which is the mother of error. For there are some who set such store by their powers, that they look on their minds as the measure of the divine Being; taking what they trow for truth, and deeming untruth what they do not trow.

ON FAITH

‘Fourthly : another advantage is noted in the writings of the Philosopher (*Ethics*, c. 7). For when Simonides would have persuaded a certain man to give up divine science and apply himself to human affairs, he said that a man should delight in the things of a man, and a mortal in the things of a mortal. Whereupon the Philosopher says that, on the contrary, a man should raise himself to immortal and divine things. Hence in his book *On Animals*, c. 5, he says, that although we can discover but little about the highest beings, yet is that little more loved and sought after than all the knowledge we have of lower beings.

‘From all this it is clear that even the scantiest knowledge of the highest beings gives great perfection to the soul. And thus, although the things that are beyond reason cannot wholly be grasped by reason, yet may reason reach a high perfection if in any way whatsoever it holds them by faith. Wherefore, it is written : “For many things are shown thee above the understanding of men” (Ecclus. iii. 25).’

I^a II^{ae} Qu. 27, Art. 2, 2^m : ‘For the perfection of knowledge something is needed which is not necessary for the perfection of love.

‘For knowledge is a work of reason, and the function of reason is to analyse things that are really united, and to synthesise things that are separated, which it does by comparing one with another. Hence perfect knowledge requires that a man shall know in detail whatever belongs to a being—as its parts, powers, properties.

‘But love is in the appetitive power which regards things as they are in themselves. Hence for perfect

APPENDIX

love it is enough that the thing shall be loved as it is known in itself. And thus it is that a thing may be loved more than known, for it may be perfectly loved yet not perfectly known; as appears in the Science of Rhetoric, which some love on account of a summary knowledge they have of it. Thus some, for instance, only know that rhetoric is a science whereby a man can persuade; and this they love in rhetoric. And the same is to be said of the Love of God.'

When the Knights of St. John were defending Malta against the fierce attack of the Turks in 1565, La Valette, the Master of the Order, struck a coarse copper coinage bearing the proud inscription

NON · AES · SED · FIDES.

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